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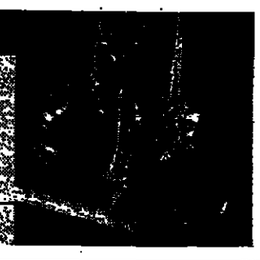
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Arts, G2 pages 10-11

Can machines think like us?

A meeting of minds

OnLine, G2 pages 12-13

'I am not desperate. But I am determined. It takes courage'

John Mullin
Ireland Correspondent

MO MOWLAM, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, will make an unprecedented and astonishing gamble by going into the notorious Maze Prison tomorrow in an attempt to persuade loyalist inmates to stick with the peace process.

No secretary of state has ever gone to the H-block complex for discussions with convicted terrorists. Among those she will meet is Michael Stone, who has convictions for murdering six Catholics, three of them at an IRA funeral in 1988. Another is Johnny Adair, the Ulster Freedom Fighters' commander known by fellow paramilitaries as Mad Dog.

Ms Mowlam made her bold decision during a lengthy meeting with the Ulster Democratic Party, the fringe loyalist group fighting to remain at the multi-party talks, which are due to resume on Monday. Downing Street said her move had the backing of Tony Blair. It is the biggest gamble of Ms Mowlam's career.

She will meet the Maze leadership of the outlawed Ulster Defence Association and UFF, represented at Stormont by the UDP. The 130 UDA/UFF prisoners voted on Sunday by two to one to withdraw their backing for the UDP's continued participation at Stormont, and rebuffed the party's pleas on Tuesday to reconsider.

It will be impossible for the UDP to stay at the talks unless the UDA/UFF prisoners change their minds. Withdrawal would signal an end to the three-year-old loyalist ceasefire, and plunge Northern Ireland back into savage violence.

Ms Mowlam, who met the UDP for two hours in London, said there would be no deals. "I am not desperate. But I am determined. It takes courage to push things forward. It takes risks. I am not going in to plead or negotiate or beg.

"I am going in to make one very clear point to them: that if they want progress on issues that concern them, the only way they are going to get that is by an overall settlement. The only way we are going to get a settlement is by talking. If not, we will be going back to the violence that Northern Ireland has experienced for so many years."

Gary McMichael, leader of the UDP, said: "We think the move is encouraging. But it does not guarantee a change of heart. I don't mean this in a threatening way, but say this as a pragmatist and realist. If there is no talks process — and there won't be if we are not there on Monday — then there is a vacuum, and it will be filled by a return to violence."

The UDA/UFF is implicated in the latest murder in Northern Ireland. Detectives are convinced they helped the renegade Loyalist Volunteer Force shoot dead Eddie Treanor, a 31-year-old Catholic, on New Year's Eve. The order to make available the guns in the attack is understood to have come from the UDA/UFF inside the Maze.

As well as Stone, who attacked the funeral of IRA terrorists killed by the SAS in Gibraltar, Ms Mowlam is likely to meet Johnny Adair, the UFF commander on the Shankill Road. He is serving a 16-year sentence for directing terrorism.

Also at the meeting will be Sam McCrory, the UDA's officer commanding at the Maze, serving 15 years for attempted murder; and Billy Adams, the UDA prisoner who first warned that the loyalist ceasefire was in trouble when he read a statement to reporters as he left the Maze on Christmas parole.

A UFF source said Ms Mowlam's initiative was helpful, but did not necessarily change anything.

Peter Robinson, Democratic Unionist MP for east Belfast, said he was outraged. The DUP is boycotting the Stormont talks.

Mr Robinson said: "I think she is absolutely crazy. I have to keep pinching myself to believe what is being said. The very fact she is doing this demonstrates that this whole process is dependent on terrorist organisation. Next week it will be the IRA. You think they aren't watching what is going on?"

While the UDP strives to persuade the prisoners it represents to allow it to remain at Stormont, the other fringe loyalist group appears ready to pull out. The Progressive Unionist Party, which is close to the UVF, will decide today. But one of its leaders, Billy Hutchinson, said he would be lobbying the party's executive for withdrawal.

The PUP met with David Andrews, the Irish foreign minister, yesterday. It was infuriated by the Irish government's decision to release nine IRA prisoners early.

Mr Andrews agreed with the PUP that all confidence-building measures should now be discussed in the talks.

Seeds of discontent, page 4
Leader comment and letters, page 8; Prof Brendan O'Leary, page 9



Mo Mowlam in London yesterday. She received Tony Blair's backing for her decision to go into the notorious Maze prison PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLE

The Maze commanders



MICHAEL STONE

Age: 42.

Position: Member of four-man Ulster Defence Association "camp council". Guru for young loyalists.

Offence: Murdered six Catholics, including three in grenade and gun attack on IRA funeral at Milltown cemetery.

Sentence: Life imprisonment.

Said he was influenced by Ian Paisley as a youngster: "I saw him on the back of his coal lorry with loudspeakers going, guldering [roaring]. It was a cry to arms."



JOHNNY 'MAD DOG' ADAIR

Age: 33.

Position: Ulster Freedom Fighters commander.

Offence: Directed UFF activities in West Belfast.

Sentence: Jailed for 16 years in 1995.

Prosecutor said Adair was "dedicated to his cause, which was nakedly sectarian in its hatred of those it regarded as militant republican, among whom he had lumped almost the entire Catholic population".



BILLY ADAMS

Age: 38.

Position: Media-friendly UDA spokesman. Keeps a mobile phone in his cell.

Offence: Two sub-machine guns and two balaclava helmets found in his car in March 1994.

Sentence: 10-12 years' jail.

Told reporters outside Maze during Christmas parole: "We want to see our political party making progress, but they are being pushed aside. They do not seem to be making any progress no matter how hard they try."

Tory MPs surrender leadership choice to members

Five steps to picking a Tory leader

The most likely method to be chosen

1. Support of a quarter of all Tory MPs or 45 MPs, whichever is fewer, will be needed to trigger a No Confidence vote in the leader.
2. If the leader gets fewer than 51% of all the votes of eligible MPs, he or she must stand down and cannot stand in the subsequent contest.
3. Candidates must get backing of 10% of Tory MPs before standing in the Westminster 'primary' in which only MPs can vote.
4. Any candidate with more than 25% of the votes, in practice two or possibly three, becomes eligible to stand for the final round.
5. Grassroots, members of the party across Britain pick their leader by a simple majority, on the one member/one vote principle.

Michael White
Political Editor

CONSERVATIVE MPs are on the brink of making an extraordinary concession to outraged grassroots opinion by abandoning their role in electing party leaders and leaving the final choice to ordinary members.

The change to the leadership election rules is part of the modernising package of reforms being pushed through the party hierarchy by William Hague's praetorian guard as part of the Tories' long march back to power against Tony Blair's 178-seat Commons majority.

But Mr Hague, aged 36, has been taken aback by the anger of Tory activists after the shambles of the final Major years. He has been forced to make concessions which will render him more vulnerable to a coup if he fails to make much impact before the next election.

If the leader gets less than 51 per cent of the votes of eligible MPs in a no confidence vote, he or she will have to stand down and have no chance to appeal to the 350,000 ordinary party members who have the crucial say.

This is an historic U-turn less than 20 years after Margaret Thatcher denounced Labour's electoral college for giving a say to unions and local parties.

The youngest Tory leader for 200 years will seek to strengthen his position in parallel reforms of the party constitution which are due to be put to a special meeting of key activists in the Conservatives' National Union in London on January 17. One MEP described it as "the day the new Tory party is effectively born".

If accepted the reform "green paper" drawn up by Archie Norman, the former Asda chief, will streamline and democratise a previously elitist party machine with a new board of management, albeit one which the leadership can largely control.

Through this reform, and a tighter disciplinary code for MPs, Mr Hague hopes gradually to gain the upper hand, as he showed by facing down pro-European "grandees" this week.

The strategy is risky, not least because it strips local heavyweights of influence in favour of a blend of grassroots democracy — Mr Hague

turn to page 3, column 4

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New twist to video nasty debate



CHILD'S PLAY 3: Described as a "sadistic horror film", the Jack Bender video brought a welter of complaints after it was linked to the death of James Bulger in 1993. "I suspect that exposure to violent video films may in part be an explanation," said Mr Justice Morland, the trial judge.



NATURAL BORN KILLERS: Linked to at least three murder cases in America and France, the video release of Oliver Stone's film was postponed by Warner Home Video after the Dunblane massacre. In the most highly publicised case, two teenage killers from Paris who stabbed their victim 40 times said it was their favourite film along with Silence of the Lambs.



JUICE: A savage video film about a shopkeeper who is murdered for trying to enforce the law. It was cited during the trial of four men convicted of killing Les Reed, the 46-year-old who remonstrated with them for kicking down traffic bollards. One was said to have repeated a line from the film, "I have got the juice," after the murder.



RESERVOIR DOGS: Quentin Tarantino's gangster movie brought strong protests from MPs and family organisations. The film's diet of multiple murders and torture was criticised for glamorising a violent lifestyle.

Film violence link to teenage crime

'Vulnerable' young people may be influenced by screen killings

Kamal Ahmed
Media Correspondent

THE heated debate over the effect of violent films on the young took a fresh twist yesterday when new research suggested a link between video violence and criminal behaviour.

Although admitting that most teenagers were unlikely to be affected by violent films, the authors of the Home Office study said that for those in a "vulnerable" situation, films that glamorised killing could encourage them to commit more crimes.

The report said young offenders were more likely to watch violent films and associate with the kind of characters depicted by Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger. "Violent films have the potential to cause crime," said Dr Kevin Browne, a psychologist at the University of Birmingham and author of the report. "The nine out of 10 people who do not come from vulnerable backgrounds will be less affected but for those who are not so fortunate, the frequency of their violence may increase."

Dr Browne said he was particularly concerned that inmates at Young Offenders' Institutions were allowed to watch violent films with little control. Last night the prison service said it was reviewing its guidelines.

The study re-ignites the debate on film violence and teenagers. In 1993 MPs called for certain films to be banned after Child's Play 3 was linked to the murder of James Bulger. Other films attacked include Natural Born Killers, Reservoir Dogs and Pulp Fiction.

Campaigners for reform of the censorship rules governing violent videos said the research revealed that more action needed to be taken.

"This is another crucial piece in the jigsaw in giving us the full picture about the links between screen violence and violent behaviour," said John Bartley, general secretary of the Movement for Christian Democracy.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, said the report would be given to the British Board of Film Classification, the body that controls the certification of films, which would be expected to study it closely. There have been reports of growing tensions between the Home Office and the BBFC, which has been criticised for giving certificates to violent films.

James Ferman, the director of the BBFC, said the report showed how careful the body had to be in giving films certificates and said it regularly cut more from video films than those at the cinema.

"Our job is to get the message across to parents that certificates are important. If it says 18 on the cover then children below that age should not be watching it."

The study, based on interviews with more than 80 male violent and non-violent offenders between the ages of 15 and 21 and 40 non-offenders, said that teenage violent offenders were better at remembering graphic details from films than non-offenders.

The report cited one example where a teenager had made a copy of the glove worn by the Freddy Kruger character in the Nightmare on Elm Street film series, with craft knife blades instead of razor blade fingers. The glove was covered in human blood.

The film industry, worried about greater censorship, pointed out that the study does say that a violent home background and an aggressive temperament play an important role in whether a teenager becomes a criminal.

"If films and videos create violence then how do we explain the Victorian era when it was much more dangerous to walk the streets?" said the film director Michael Winner.

Sally Hibbin, the producer of ID, a film about football hooliganism used as part of the report, said blaming films was an easy way to explain away violence.

Jobcentres fiddled the figures

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

AN investigation is to be launched to verify that 1.75 million unemployed really did go back to work last year after an internal inquiry revealed that jobcentres fiddled placements by an estimated 320,000 in the run-up to the general election.

Leigh Lewis, chief executive of the Employment Service, has asked the National Audit Office to verify his staff's figures for the current year after auditors proved that as many as one in five job placements made last year could have been faked.

The fake jobs are in addition to official figures revealing that the Employment Service missed its target of 1.97 million placements for 1996-97 by 312,000. Altogether it means that only 1.336 million people got back to work — 564,000 below the 1.9 million claimed by Gillian Shephard, the former Tory employment secretary, before the election, and 634,000 below the official target.

The huge shortfall — revealed in the Guardian last April — was caused by staff not coping with the introduction of the new Jobseeker's Allowance and being given unrealistic targets to get people back to work. Staff also received performance-related bonuses, depending partly on the number of claimants they placed in jobs.

Only the fact that Whitehall's performance-related pay scheme in jobcentres was based on wider objectives than just placing people in jobs has prevented the National Audit Office recommending that staff's pay should be docked.

The original scandal came to light after whistleblowers among staff in London and the South-East revealed double-counting and fake job scams. In one case in south London, new job starters at the McDonald's fast-food chain in Croydon appeared as job placements at several different jobcentres.

Last year the Government launched an internal investigation into allegations about the massaging of jobs figures at three north London jobcentres. Further investigations were conducted into alleged scams in Stevenage and south London. A report will be published by the Employment Service with this year's accounts.

Meanwhile auditors decided to check 15 jobcentres in three other regions of the United Kingdom, selected to give a national picture. In 21 per cent of placements, they found no evidence to support claims by staff that the people had got jobs. New checking procedures were introduced.

Now the National Audit Office is to verify whether all the 1.75 million who should be placed in work by jobcentres by this April have found real jobs. Other targets for this year to be verified by auditors for accuracy include:

- That 75,000 Jobseeker's Allowance claimants out of work for two years got real jobs.
- That 150,000 unemployed people were placed on training programmes.
- That 4.8 per cent of disabled claimants got real jobs.
- That 90 per cent of all Jobseeker's Allowance claims are dealt with within seven days.
- That all claimants turned down for Jobseeker's Allowance can get an appeal result within 10 days.

Sir John Bourn, the Comptroller and Auditor General, has decided that this year's exercise will be the first of a series of annual checks on the agency's figures.

The decision means that auditors will be able to monitor in depth the centrepiece of government policy — Gordon Brown's £3.5 billion Welfare to Work programme — where ministers have made ambitious claims that every person between 18 and 24 will be offered a job or training and promised to extend the scheme to the 25 to 35 age group.

Politician alleges vendetta, but ex-secretary says she felt job was secure despite marriage break-up



Labour MP and ex-boxer James Wray: 'Humiliated' PHOTOGRAPHS: IAN McLELLAN

MP in slanging match with wife over sacking

Lawrence Donegan

A LABOUR MP became involved in an extraordinary slanging match with his estranged wife yesterday after she accused him of unfairly dismissing her as his constituency secretary.

James Wray, once a boxer and now MP for Glasgow Ballieston, accused his second wife, Catherine Wray, of waging a vendetta against him in an effort to ruin his political career. "I have been bombarded, humiliated and embarrassed," the MP said after an industrial tribunal hearing in Glasgow.

Mrs Wray, who separated from her husband in 1995, is suing the MP for unfair dismissal, claiming he acted unreasonably in sacking her against the background of the break-up of their marriage. She worked for Mr Wray from 1987 until last year's general election.

The couple are involved in protracted divorce proceedings. Mr Wray, aged 63, hopes to marry a 35-year-old Glasgow solicitor, Laura Walker, who is expecting a baby in the summer, later this year. He has reportedly asked the flamboyant boxing promoter Don King to be his best man, with the world featherweight champion, Naseem Hamed, in attendance.

Speaking after the three-hour hearing, Mr Wray claimed that his wife's claim for unfair dismissal was bound up with her pursuit of a divorce settlement in which she was looking for the "moon and the stars".



Catherine Wray: Denied MP complained about her work

"This is only chickenfeed. It's the big prize they are after. I am not going to let somebody take me to the cleaners," he said. "I don't care whether I win or lose. It doesn't matter to me as long as I get justice at the end of the day. I just wanted to bring this relationship to an end."

Mrs Wray told the tribunal she began working for the MP in 1987, handling mail, telephone calls and constituent inquiries in Glasgow. She earned £9,700 last year and she said Mr Wray paid her regular bonuses.

The tribunal heard that she continued working for him, despite their marital problems. Lawyers for Mrs Wray said she accepted her job would end if her husband were to be deselected or to lose his seat, but believed it was secure while Mr Wray retained his seat.

At an earlier hearing, the MP's lawyer said his wife had received verbal warnings over late correspondence and accused her of "seeking to frustrate his political career by being deliberately obstructive". Yesterday Mrs Wray said her husband had never complained about her work.

Mr Wray told the hearing it had always been his understanding that he had not employed his wife for life. MPs were not in a position to offer open-ended employment.

He had been "more than kind" to his wife. "I only saw her during employment three times in person. You tell me anybody that can have a working relationship with somebody that they only speak to three times in person."

He had continued to employ Mrs Wray until the 1997 election because he did not want to see her "landed on Skid Row".

"I don't want to waste the time of the tribunal because as far as I am concerned the situation is that we had a very upsetting marriage and that created the disturbance during that period of time," he said.

The tribunal will give its written findings at a later date.

Ill-judged pantomime will win no new friends for Fo

Review

Michael Billington

Klaxons, Trumpets and Raspberries
Gate Theatre, Notting Hill

DARIO FO, the Nobel Prize-winning Italian playwright, brings out the best and worst in British companies: you get pungent farce or slapdash pantomime. This ill-judged revival of his 1981 political comedy, by a young group called Juggling Fiends, falls heavily into the latter category and is unlikely to win Fo new friends.

You could argue the play itself has dated. Its starting point was the kidnapping of politician Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades in 1978. Out of that Fo creates a farcial fantasy in which the boss of Fiat, Gianni Agnelli, is rescued from a blazing car by one of his own militant employees, Antonio Berardi. But when plastic surgeons get to work on the disfigured Agnelli, hospitalised wearing Antonio's jacket, they facially reconstruct him on the lines of his activist assembly-line worker. The stage is thus set for a political comedy of errors.

The play obviously depends on topical circumstance. But it still has relevance: Fo makes the point that the heads of giant multinationals enjoy a power which transcends that of prime ministers. In an age when politicians go cap in hand to global media tycoons this strikes me as pertinent.

But everything in this production goes off at half-cock. For a start, Jonathan Dryden Taylor's new translation retains the Italian background of political kidnapping while working in references to Tony Blair, Bernie Ecclestone and downsizing, which means that the action seems to be taking place in some temporal and geographical hybrid. And, although I realise Juggling Fiends may be strapped for cash, it is pointless to do the play with only four actors. The basic joke, by which one actor plays the two key roles, is instantly killed when everyone is rushing in and out in disguises.

While Dario Fo, who is a great comic, may be able to get away with combining the roles of director and star, it also seems a mistake for Robert Thorogood to emulate the master. His dual performance is all sweat and effort.

It is sad to damn a young company. But farce is a form that demands the highest professional skill. What we get here is a lunging, amateurish wildness that evokes the Edinburgh Fringe on a bad night.

This review appeared in some editions yesterday.

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'We are making a stand . . .' Glen Le Santo with daughter Tara, aged 14, wearing the nose stud he bought her for Christmas PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID BARR

School bars girl over nose stud

Headteacher's attitude is so old-fashioned, says Tara – and her father backs her all the way, reports **Vivek Chaudhary**

IT was Tara Le Santo's idea of a perfect Christmas present. Not only had she always wanted her nose pierced but her father, Glen, was happy to pay for it.

Tara's joy with her £5 nose stud proved to be short-lived, however, when she returned to school this week. The tiny stud, less than 2mm wide, was barely visible to most of her classmates but when her form teacher spotted it, he frog-marched her off to the headmaster's office.

Tara, aged 14, was told she would have to remove the stud because it broke the rules on uniform or she would not be allowed to attend school.

She said: "I'm quite prepared to sit at home and not return to school. I don't see why the school has the right to dictate to me what I can or can't wear. It's just so old-fashioned. Most of my friends didn't even notice the nose stud, which is smaller than an average-sized spot."

The dispute has pitched Tara and Mr Le Santo, who accompanied his daughter when she went to get her nose pierced, against David Brittain, headmaster of the Sir John Nelthorpe school in Brigg, Lincolnshire.

Her father says he is quite prepared for Tara to stay away from school if she wants to keep the stud. Mr Le Santo, a journalist for a motorbike magazine, said: "I've discussed the issue with Tara and she's adamant that she does not want to remove the nose stud. I'm quite prepared to back her all the way. If the school wants to exclude her for the next two years then they should do that but the nose stud stays. We are making a stand against all this old-fashioned crap."

Mr Le Santo said that after Tara was removed from school he spoke to Mr Brittain, who told him that if she had been Asian she would have been allowed to keep the nose stud because it was "part of Asian culture".

He said: "The school is just over-reacting. Wearing a nose stud is not strictly part of Asian culture — it's a fashion thing like it is for other races. The stud does not have an effect on Tara's education and this is just a power game that the school is playing."

Tara is described as an intelligent pupil who is likely to do well in her GCSE exams. She runs her own magazine for teenagers on the Internet.

Mr Brittain conceded that the nose stud did not affect her education and that she was a "pleasant, bright pupil". But he added: "Our rules don't allow nose studs in school so if Tara wants to return she will have to remove it during school hours. We can't change the rules and you could say we are being a little old-fashioned. But nose studs are not common in this area. Perhaps if Tara had been in London things would have been different."

He admitted that if Tara had been Asian she would have been allowed to wear a nose stud.

He said: "There are certain cultural and religious factors we have to take into account but not in this case."

As Tara prepares for a long wait at home, with her stud firmly in place, she plans to spend her time studying and raising the issue on her Internet magazine.

She said: "I think it's about time people my age stood up for their rights. People should be able to stick whatever they want in their nose."

Right could rally as Botha must face court

David Beresford in Johannesburg

THE South African authorities yesterday reluctantly began criminal proceedings against former president PW Botha over his defiance of the truth commission, amid fears that they could be creating a rightwing martyr.

The attorney-general of the Western Cape, Frank Kahn, announced that the man known as "the Great Crocodile" for his authoritarian style of rule would be summoned to appear before the regional court in his home town, George, on January 23.

Mr Botha is to be prosecuted for failing to obey a subpoena to appear before Archbishop Desmond Tutu's truth commission last month. If convicted he faces a maximum sentence of two years' imprisonment or a 20,000 rand (£2,500) fine.

"He is almost 82 years of age and no attorney-general in any civilised country lightly decides to prosecute a person of his age, especially given Mr Botha's medical history," Mr Kahn said. But he added that the truth commission needed Mr Botha's evidence and a prosecution was in the public interest.

Mr Botha has described the commission as a "circus" and accused it of victimising him.

The truth commission, which has gone to some lengths to cajole Mr Botha into testifying, made a final attempt yesterday, promising to try to get the prosecution dropped if he appeared.

The commission wants Mr Botha to shed light on the workings of the state security council, which he chaired in the 1980s at the height of the anti-apartheid conflict.

The government's nervousness about the prosecution was reflected in an appeal by the justice minister, Dullah Omar, for public acceptance of the decision. "It is vital that we establish the rule of law in South Africa," he said. "Nobody is above the law."

But the readiness of rightwingers to exploit the prosecution was quickly made apparent by the Conservative Party, which said: "The Afrikaner is fed up with being the target of the government and its lackey, the [truth commission]. We are sick of receiving the blame for everything."

Daryl Swanepoel, a spokesman for Mr Botha's National Party, said the attorney-general had no choice but to prosecute and appealed to Mr Botha to respect the law.

But he said this situation could have been avoided if the commission had worked through 1,700 pages of written submissions by Mr Botha before deciding whether to subpoena him.

He said there was a sharp contrast between the truth commission's treatment of Mr Botha and the granting of blanket amnesties to ANC leaders without requiring them to appear.

The big question is whether the showdown with Mr Botha will provide a rallying point for rightwingers, of whom little has been heard since an abortive attempt to prosecute the former defence minister, General Magnus Malan, for murder in 1996.

Mr Botha disclosed at the weekend that former generals had started a fund for his legal defence.

Recent warnings by President Nelson Mandela of rightwing conspiracies to destabilise the country suggest that a counter-revolutionary threat persists.

The military — unlike the police — have largely ignored the truth commission. Their failure to apply for amnesty opens them to prosecution for apartheid-era crimes. A decision on whether to make a stand on behalf of their former commander may turn on their assessment of whether they in turn will face prosecution.

Homosexual murder scandal hits Vatican

John Hooper in Rome

POLICE in Rome were last night hunting for the gay killer of one of the Pope's gentlemen-in-waiting who was found battered to death in the living room of his flat — his Vatican medals and mementoes ranged around the walls and a homosexual pornographic movie in the video player.

Enrico Sini Luzi, a papal official aged 67, was dressed in his underpants and vest and had a silk scarf tied round his neck. He was lying face down on a velvet cushion and the back of his head had been smashed in. A blood-stained brass candelabra was discovered nearby. There were marks on his body consistent with sado-masochistic foreplay, officials said.

Investigations have already shown that the silver-haired Sini Luzi, who looked at least a dozen years younger than his age, led an extraordinary double life.

By day, he inhabited the corridors and chambers of the Apostolic Palace dressed in white tie and tails, bedecked with Papal decorations. As one of "His Holiness's Gentlemen", his job was to escort bishops, ambassadors and heads of state to and from the papal apartments and make small talk with them as they waited for their audiences with the pontiff.

By night, it emerged yesterday, he was a well-known figure in the male-only bars of Rome. "He was a sociable chap — perhaps too much so," a neighbour said. "He brought a lot of people home, particularly young men."



Enrico Sini Luzi: murdered papal official led double life

Sini Luzi was the latest of 19 suspected gays to have been murdered in Rome since 1990. Only eight of the crimes have been solved and there has been speculation that some or all of the others could have been the work of a serial killer. A number of the victims were found with scarves around their necks.

Spokesmen for Italy's gay community pounced on the latest murder to call for greater tolerance from the Roman Catholic Church. The official view, summed up in the Church's 1992 catechism, is that homosexual tendencies are not sinful but that homosexual activities are "intrinsically disordered".

Recalling that Sini Luzi was "very close to His Holiness", Massimo Consoli, one of the founders of Italy's gay movement, called on the Pope to condemn the murders of homosexuals. He said the Vatican's attitude towards gay people was a key reason why so many died violent deaths.

"Society views homosexuals as a race apart and they, by force of circumstance, live hidden lives and are forced to drag the more unsavoury parts of the city for boys to take home where no one can see them," he said.

Sini Luzi's body was discovered by firefighters who broke into his home late on Monday night. The autopsy concluded he had been murdered about 24 hours earlier.

Prosecutors have ordered tests for any trace of the murderer's blood on the corpse.

Sini Luzi's flat was in disorder and his wallet, found near his body, was empty. But detectives said they believed the theft of his cash, and of some coins he had collected, was a diversion. The murderer left untouched a large number of valuable items.

Few of the victims of Rome's gay slayings have been robbed in earnest — one reason why suspicions have fallen on a murderer who kills for kicks.

His Holiness's Gentlemen are the linear descendants of the noblemen who attended the pontiff until they were ushered out of the Vatican by Pope Paul VI in 1968.

Sini Luzi, a former tobacconist, came from a distinguished family. His father was head of the provincial administration in Viterbo.

Conservative Party members to get final say on leadership

continued from page 1

wants 1 million members — and centralised management.

But the first phase of the reform package — due to be rubber-stamped at the party's spring conference — involves the election process. The chairman of the backbench 1922 committee, Sir Archie Hamilton, is sending ballot papers to all 164 Tory MPs this weekend, which they must return by Wednesday.

Initially it asks them if they favour change or the status quo, whereby MPs alone pick Tory leaders — as they have done four times since the last big reforms, in 1965, replaced the discredited system of informal soundings of the "magic circle".

Despite Sir Archie's initial commitment to resist all pressure, he and the 1922 executive have been forced to retreat. The status quo is not an option.

MPs are being asked what detailed alternatives they prefer for triggering a vote of no confidence in the leader and what new electoral system they want: a wider electoral college involving peers, MEPs and local bigwigs; a simple one member/one vote (OMOV) election involving the estimated 300-350,000 paid-up members; a mixture of both; or a parliamentary primary followed by OMOV.

Informed members on both wings of the party agreed last night that in the present climate the last option is bound to prevail. "MPs will be reduced to weeding out the candidates," predicted a moderate.

Short of Nessie packing her bags and heading south, it would be hard to imagine a more significant loss to Scotland's popular culture.
Is Robert Carlyle leaving home?

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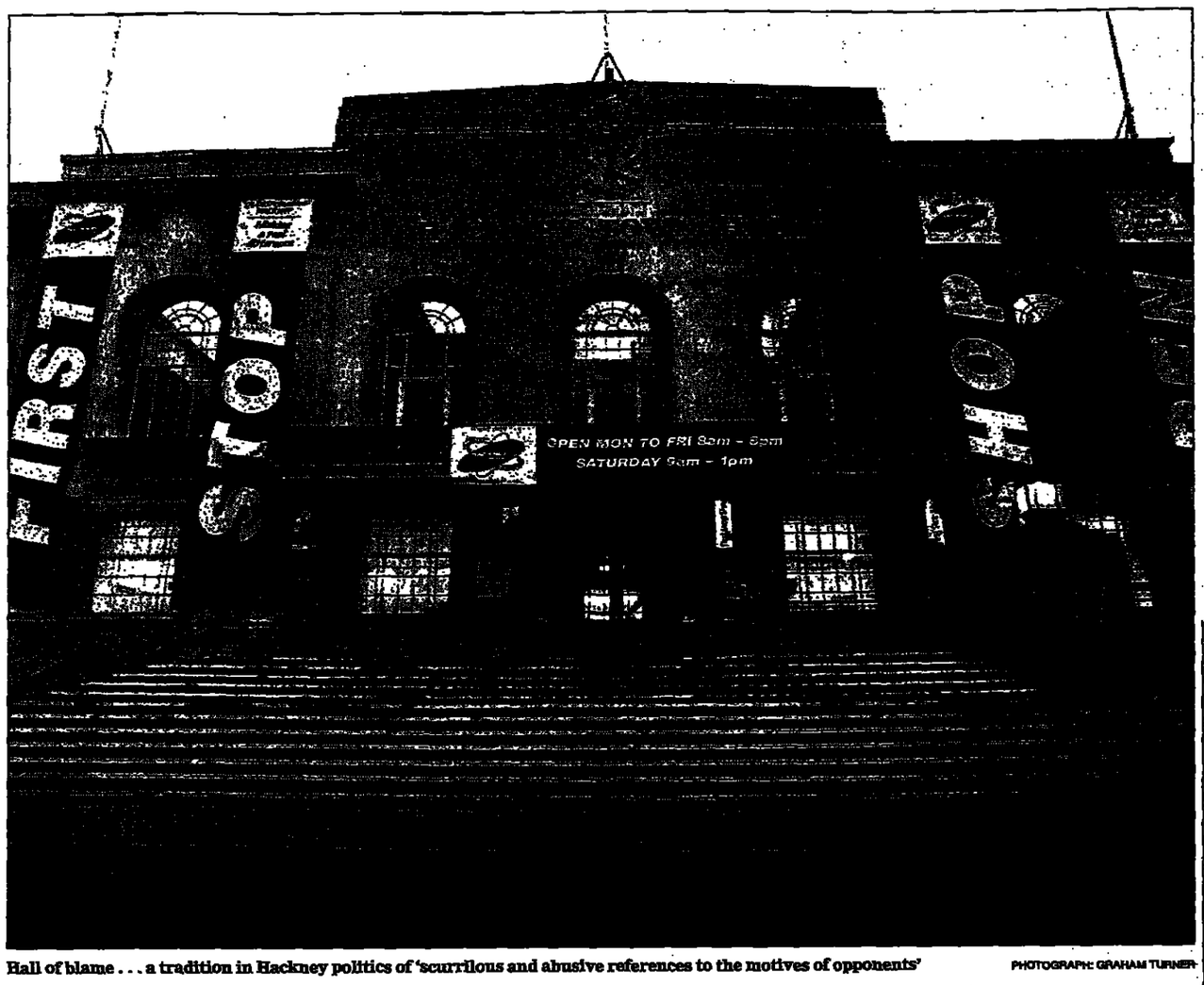
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The Guardian Thursday January 8 1998

Report attacks delays in abuse case. Sarah Boseley reports

Council turned a crisis into chaos

'Rumour's regarded as a standard political weapon in Hackney. Life at Hackney town hall abounds in claims based on no more than repeated rumour'



Hall of blame . . . a tradition in Hackney politics of 'scurrilous and abusive references to the motives of opponents' PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER



Mark Trotter: A plausible paedophile with easygoing charm and impeccable Labour Party credentials

MARK TROTTER (above) was an engaging young man who charmed everyone he met.

Shortly after his arrival in Hackney in 1981 to work in the Trowbridge House secure children's home, he joined the Labour Party, which ruled the borough. He became an election agent, worked in the party's campaigns unit and was shortlisted for a council seat in 1986.

He was a trade unionist, representing young people in Nalgo, and openly gay. For Labour, he had the perfect credentials. Whether or not his affiliations were part of his cover, when it became known that Liverpool police had come to arrest him in the summer of 1985 on five charges of sexually abusing young boys in a children's home, his connections made him political dynamite.

Embarrassment at Trotter's closeness to the ruling Labour establishment was not the reason why Hackney was secretive and hokey about the affair, but it looked that way to many.

Trotter had died of an Aids-related illness a couple of weeks before the police arrived, as did the two young men he lived with in his time in Hackney. Social Services were concerned not to distress children who had passed through the Trowbridge House home and were aware that the danger Trotter posed had passed — although it was feared he might have associates.

Len Redley, an area manager who had put in his resignation, was persuaded to undertake an initial inquiry. He was supposed to trace staff and children from the home, find out whether anybody alleged abuse and get them help. It was a huge task, which perhaps the director of social services, Joyce Moseley, and assistant director, Dinah Morley, did not at first realise. Children leaving care disperse around the country, leaving little trace. Some 400 to 500 children had passed through the home.

There had been warnings of the danger Trotter posed. Just a month after his arrival, a boy at Trowbridge alleged Trotter had interfered with him. The following month, another alleged a serious assault. In December 1984, Liverpool social services contacted Hackney over allegations that Trotter had made improper suggestions to children in his former job. In January 1989, a girl from Trowbridge said he had improperly touched her on a camping trip seven years earlier. Each accusation was investigated and insufficient proof was found.

Mr Redley had these starting points but got virtually nowhere in his inquiries. Eventually, in June 1996, nine months being given the task, Mr Redley produced a handwritten document of seven pages.

By that time, the story was out, politicians were baying for blood and accusations of cover-ups to protect supposed high-placed Labour party friends of Trotter, conspiracies and worse were rife. By September 1996, an independent inquiry was the only way out of the mess.

INCOMPETENCE and poisonous political infighting turned a crisis into chaos at Hackney council following police revelations that Mark Trotter, a children's care worker who died of Aids, was a suspected paedophile, an independent inquiry reported yesterday.

John Barratt, the former chief executive of Cambridgeshire county council, who headed the year-long inquiry, cleared Hackney councillors and officers of corruption. But he produced a damning indictment of the political culture in the borough which caused unacceptable delays in tracing children Trotter might have abused and led to public allegations of a cover-up.

The NSPCC, which eventually took over the tracing exercise at Hackney's request, has found that six children in the borough were abused by Trotter.

Hackney faces an enormous challenge in trying to regain credibility, the report says, and Mr Barratt fears that the problems he has uncovered are not uncommon.

"Many people, including observers from outside Hackney, have told me that the situation ... is little different from that in other inner London boroughs. If this is correct it may be a reason for central government to examine the efficacy of some current systems for public service delivery, but it is hardly an excuse for a council to continue such a discredited course."

The director of social services and an assistant director at the time are criticised for failing to supervise Len Redley, an area manager charged with finding children from the Hackney home after Liverpool police broke the news of Trotter's abuse in a former job. Mr Redley is accused of impropriety. It took him nine months to produce an inadequate report.

So slow was Hackney to respond to the charges against Trotter and act to find and help any victims, that a child abuse problem became an insurmountable crisis which split the ruling Labour Party and caused politicians of all allegiances to accuse each other and council officers of a cover-up. Eventually an independent inquiry was called in September, 1996.

"With hindsight," says Mr Barratt's report, "it is now clear to me that this inquiry ... has been unnecessary. The blame for this situation must rest on all those who, over many years, have disabled and weakened Hackney's local political processes."

Because Trotter had been a Labour Party activist and trade unionist in the borough, there had been allegations that council officers — many of whom were themselves party members — and councillors, had ignored four separate complaints of abuse brought against him while he was working in Hackney, none of which was proven.

Mr Barratt found that Trotter had not received protection because of his Labour Party links. The allegations were investigated, even if not in the way laid down in the council's formal procedures. "He was dealt with. He wasn't dealt with by the rules. I call that impropriety. I don't call that corruption."

Inadequacies in dealing with the Trotter affair were due to organisational incompetence rather than corrupt political conspiracies. A consistent approach and constructive attitude were needed to put Hackney on a sounder footing "which the volatility of personalised politics cannot support.

"Defamatory rumour is regarded as a standard political weapon in Hackney. Life at Hackney Town Hall abounds in allegations against individuals based, to an extraordinary extent, on no more than repeated rumour ... There is a tradition within Hackney local politics of scurrilous and abusive references to the motives and practices of opponents which makes it difficult for officers, and the media, to take each other and local politicians seriously.

"What is particularly regrettable is that some people who spoke to me seemed to accept that a poisonous, personality-based political approach to Hackney's social problems was inevitable. Indeed, some people seemed proud of this local characteristic. It was foolishly equated with 'tough' politics. Far from being tough, it is an evasion of responsibility."

John McCafferty, the leader of the Hackney Labour group, which split during the Trotter crisis leaving the council hung, said: "Hackney Labour was wrongly acused of a cover-up in the Trotter affair. This accusation has been completely rebutted by this independent inquiry."

Catalogue of failure

- Organisational incompetence, not corruption, was to blame for Hackney's poor handling of the Trotter affair.
- Defamatory rumours and allegations endemic in Town Hall culture.
- Len Redley, the area manager who undertook initial inquiry in 1996, heavily criticised for inadequate work. Assistant social services director, Dinah Morley, and director, Joyce Moseley, also criticised.
- Failure to suspend Trotter while allegations against him were investigated in 1984/85 and in 1987-89. But he would have been reinstated anyway as charges were not proven.
- Political reluctance to discipline employees.

Sowing the seeds of loyal discontent

As Mo Mowlam prepares to meet prisoners in the Maze tomorrow, **John Mullin** examines loyalist disillusion with the peace process

INTERNAL splits; disenchantment with the peace process; warnings of an end to negotiations and a return to all-out war in Northern Ireland. All rather familiar.

It might seem a long time ago now, but only two months back, the speculation was focused on the republican movement. Its leadership was moaning about government inaction: 20 of the IRA's top players quit at a crisis meeting and a dozen Sinn Fein members resigned in Co Louth.

Sinn Fein remains intact, thanks to its sophisticated approach. It knows the negotiations at Castle Buildings cannot deliver a united Ireland, and so it has put more emphasis on what it can get from the Government *outside* the talks.

The Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, believes there is no solution without Sinn Fein, and so, with the talks stymied, has played along. She was prepared to continue with what the loyalists see as concessions, partly because she thinks it is right that, for example, prisoners are near to their families rather than in Britain, and to a large extent to keep Sinn Fein, masters of brinkmanship, at the conference table.

To counter Sinn Fein criticism that movement was too slow, Ms Mowlam even spelled out in a speech what security measures had been implemented since the IRA restored its ceasefire in July. Some seemed pretty small, but added together it becomes easier to understand why loyalists are disillusioned.

The measures include withdrawing military support for RUC patrols in many areas; ending the use of Saxon armoured vehicles; reduced security around police stations; removing barriers in town centres. The thrust has meant a much reduced army presence.

Sinn Fein regards these moves as cosmetic. It claims army patrols have actually been increased in some republican areas. It also alleges the RUC is still trying to recruit informers.

But, aside from security, the Government has now conceded that all paramilitary prisoners in Britain can return to either Northern Ireland or the Republic. Inevitably, this benefits republicans more. Only a handful remain to be processed. There have also been improvements in prisoners' compassionate and Christmas parole.

The Government has brought forward legislation designed to give nationalists more of a say in what happens with parades during the Orange marching season. It has also removed from the statute books its powers of internment, or detention without trial.

This is little enough for Sinn Fein, which says many key issues, including policing, remain unresolved. But it is too much for the fringe loyalist parties, the Progressive Unionist Party and the Ulster Democratic Party. They feel they have got nothing out of their paramilitary supporters' ceasefire, which has lasted unbroken for three years, unlike that of the IRA.



Gary McMichael, leader of the Ulster Democratic Party, leaves the Northern Ireland Office yesterday after talks with Secretary of State Mo Mowlam PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

In Northern Ireland, a confidence-building measure which leans towards Sinn Fein is seen as something taken from the loyalists. When asked in November what she had up her sleeve to keep the loyalists feeling wanted, Ms Mowlam seemed to think it a daft question. It is key.

About then, rumblings in the loyalist camp were becoming less background noise and more forefront discontent. Into this trampled the Irish government, and then came the murder of leading loyalist Billy Wright, a watershed.

Irish officials told a meeting of the confidence-building sub-committee of the negotiations that it would make no more moves unilaterally. They agreed any deals should be discussed in that forum. The next day, Dublin said it was releasing nine IRA prisoners early, among them a terrorist believed to have masterminded the Guildford pub bombing.

This was too much. True, as the Dublin government pointed out, there are no loyalist prisoners in the Republic. But the move smacked of favouritism; worse, it was discourteous, and confirmed loyalist suspicions that they were seen as bit players at Stormont.

There was more to it. The Irish government had released 23 prisoners early during the first IRA ceasefire. Among them, Brixton escapers Pearse McAuley and Nessan Quinlivan.

Both are still wanted in the UK. McAuley has since been charged over the murder of policeman Jerry McCabe in the Republic last June during a bungled IRA armed robbery.

Rumblings in the loyalist camp became outright discontent. Into this trampled the Irish government, and then came the murder of leading loyalist Billy Wright — a watershed

Prisoners are the overriding issue. There are 265 republican prisoners in the Maze, near Belfast, including 25 on remand. Loyalists number 274, 67 of them awaiting trial.

The Government refuses to budge on demands for the early release of those guilty of lesser terrorist offences, such as membership of an illegal organisation. No moves are imminent on increasing the number eligible for parole, either through increasing remission rates or cutting the time a prisoner has to serve before qualifying.

Loyalists also want the Government to do something about a group of Protestant farmers in South Armagh, effectively cleansed from their homes by the IRA in the early years of the Troubles. Such a move would be a publicity coup for Ms Mowlam, and at little cost.

Leader comment, page 8; Professor Brendan O'Leary, page 8

Plan to shame lazy schools

John Carvel
Education Editor

THE Government said yesterday that it would "expose" complacent primary schools which coasted along with above-average test results if they failed to play their part in improving national standards of literacy.

Stephen Byers, the schools standards minister, announced ambitious literacy targets for every local education authority in England to secure a dramatic increase over the next five years in 11-year-olds' competence in reading and writing.

The targets are designed to raise the proportion reaching the required standard in English tests from 57 per cent in 1996 to 80 per cent by 2002.

Since the election, Mr Byers has led the campaign to "name and shame" failing schools and local authorities. He said the Government would be just as vigorous in pursuing sleepy schools resting on the laurels of above-average results. "We are not prescribing teaching techniques, but most people have an idea what works. It may well be that an authority falls behind and its schools are not adopting these measures. We will put pressure on those schools. They will be exposed. People will know they are falling behind."

Too many local education authorities had become stuck for several years with just over 70 per cent of their 11-year-olds reaching the standard. "It may well be they have got complacent," he told the North of England education conference in Bradford.

High-achieving authorities such as Bromley, Bury, Solihull, Surrey and Wokingham have been set a target of getting 90 per cent of 11-year-olds to the standard by 2002. Figures for 1996 showed them with scores of 67 to 74 per cent.

Authorities in deprived areas with the lowest test scores will be expected to achieve at least 70 per cent by 2002. This is about double the performance in the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham.

Cut drink-drive limit, say police as accident toll is counted

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

SENIOR police officers yesterday called for a lower drink-drive limit and for wider powers to carry out breath tests as it emerged that alcohol was involved in almost one in 10 crashes over the Christmas period.

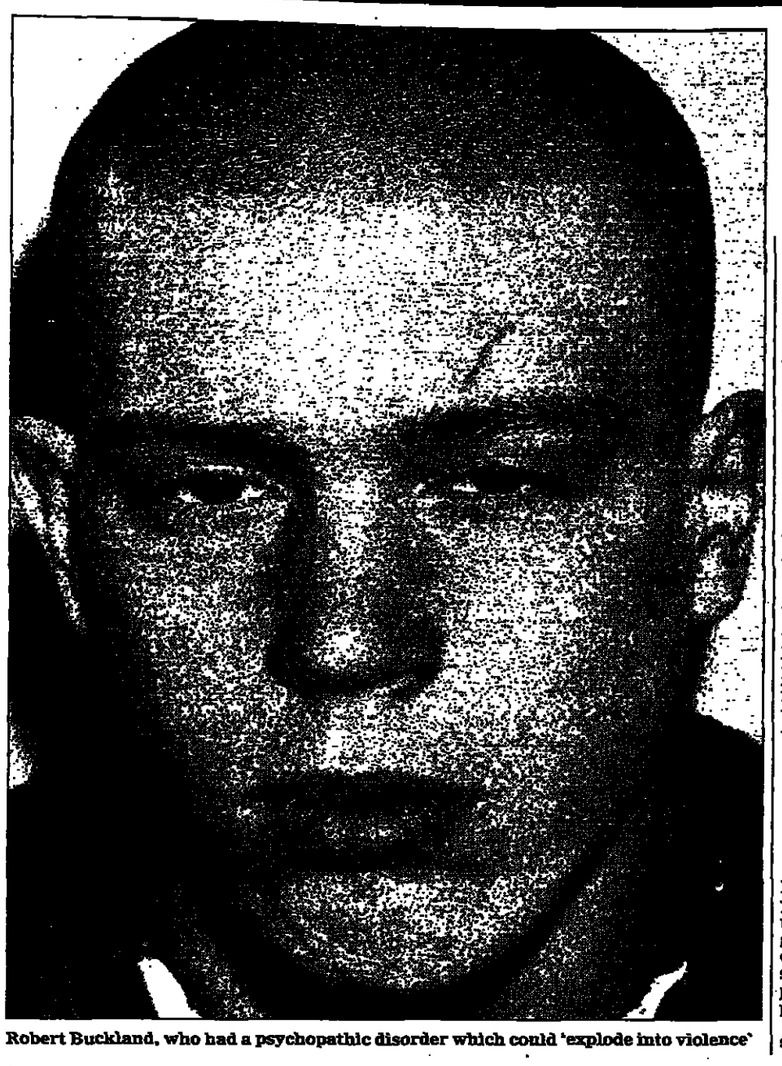
In some parts of the country, more than one in five drivers in a collision was over the limit.

Announcing the figures Paul Manning, chairman of the Association of Chief Police Officers' traffic committee, said it was time for police to be given unambiguous power to breathalyse people if they had information that they were drink-drivers. At present, a driver has to be in a collision, commit an offence, or drive in such a way as to raise suspicion.

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Train attack

Teenager who stabbed woman in head guilty of attempted murder



Robert Buckland, who had a psychopathic disorder which could 'explode into violence'

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

A HOMELESS teenager who plunged a knife up to its hilt into a young woman's head on a train was yesterday convicted at the Old Bailey of attempted murder. He will be sentenced next month following psychiatric reports.

Robert Buckland, 18, attacked Alison Kennedy, 28, a charity administrator. He had admitted the attack but claimed he had no intention to kill.

He had stabbed Ms Kennedy, an art and design graduate, with a five-inch Bowie knife as she sat reading a book on the Waterloo to Guildford train last March. Miraculously, she survived, but her peripheral vision has been affected and she is liable to post-traumatic epilepsy.



Victim Alison Kennedy: miraculously, she survived

Ms Kennedy, who attended part of the trial, said outside the court: "I feel a great sense of relief at the result and a great sense of satisfaction to be here to see it for myself. I would like to say thanks to everyone who helped me and I am looking forward to getting on with my life."

Judge Geoffrey Grigson ordered that Buckland be assessed at Broadmoor hospital and told him: "You must understand that the fact I am doing this is no indication of the sentence which I will pass. It is simply so the court is fully informed as to your condition and whether it is treatable."

A consultant psychiatrist, Nigel Eastman, said that Buckland suffered from a severe psychopathic disorder which could sometimes explode into violence. Buckland could also behave like a child and craved attention and affection.

While awaiting trial had attempted to hang himself and had cut himself.

Buckland had been living rough and begging on the streets at the time. He had lived briefly in a bedsit in Southend but often travelled by train to keep warm. His parents had divorced when he was young and he had left home at 16 after a row with his step-mother.

After the attack, he had tried to escape from the train but almost immediately telephoned the police from a phone booth to give himself up, telling them: "I hadn't even got a mate to hide me." He also told police that he had had an "urge" to strike Ms Kennedy and added "I'm a prat, aren't I?" He told police, falsely, that his parents were dead.

At school, he had drawn pictures depicting death, the Grim Reaper and mummies and one of a woman with a knife embedded in her head.

He broke down in court while giving evidence and said he had experienced a big rush of anger before he struck. "I think all the stress and frustration had all been released in that blow. I had not planned to dispose of it in that way — that was just the way I was feeling. I have fucked up her life and permanently disabled her in many areas."

He said that, after the attack, Ms Kennedy had turned to look with her hand on her head. "I let go of the knife and stepped back in shock, like you see someone do in the films. I gasped in shock. I was glued to the spot. I could hear my heart in my ears. To be quite honest, I was scared of her. I ran through the carriage."

He had originally told police that an urge had come over him because if they thought he was "a right psychopath I would be put into hospital rather than prison."

Survival depends on which area is injured

IT SEEMS incredible that anyone could survive having a 5in combat knife with a serrated edge plunged up to the hilt into the head. But neurosurgeons know that people frequently survive having spikes, knives, garden implements and other objects penetrate their skulls.

In one celebrated case some years ago, a person tried to commit suicide with an electric drill and succeeded only on the fifth hole.

We can lose large bits of our brains and get along quite happily. Removing one frontal lobe would hardly bother us at all. Taking away both, however — as happens in a frontal lobotomy — has a dramatic effect. This is because the brain is made up of two interconnected, paired halves.

James Palmer, neurosurgeon at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, recently saw a patient with a snooker cue driven through one eye to the top the skull.

In another case, a pitchfork in the back of an estate car went straight through the head of the driver, who had braked suddenly.

"Everyone thinks the brain is such a marvellous, important part of the body that you can't do anything to it without it being curtains, but a great deal of the brain does very little," Mr Palmer said. "It depends on which bit of the brain the projectile passes through. There are areas we call 'eloquent' parts of the brain and others that are 'non-eloquent'.

"The eloquent areas are deep in the centre and deal with important functions like speech, movement, sight and hearing."

Mr Palmer said despite its size of it made a difference that the knife used to stab Alison Kennedy was a sharp and relatively clean object travelling at low velocity, but her disabilities now indicated that the knife came very close to an eloquent area.

Blows on the head or shaking — the typical boxing injury — often caused more damage than did penetration by a sharp instrument, he said, because of the pairing in the brain. "The sort of injuries you get from car crashes, motorcycle accidents and boxing affect both sides. If the brain shakes you get tearing in the middle, which can cause severe damage."

The way to deal with a large knife embedded in the skull was to pull it out, he said.

"The only worry is that the object might have passed through a blood vessel and stopped it bleeding, and when you remove it you get a haemorrhage."

To prevent infection, it would also be necessary to repair the dura — the membrane around the brain.

Brain tissue could not regrow and heal, but in some cases the neurones "rewired" themselves so that nerve messages were re-routed around the damaged area.

Peter Kirkpatrick, neurosurgeon at Addenbrooke's hospital, Cambridge, added: "An object embedded in someone's skull should never be removed except under strictly controlled conditions."

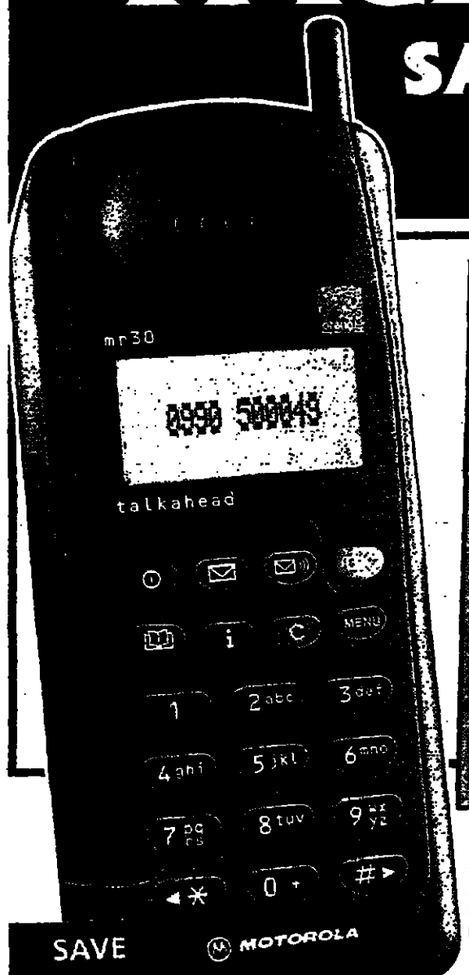


X-ray of Alison Kennedy's head after the attack

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SOUTHWESTERN BELL Cordless Telephone with Digital Answering Machine — intercom facility between base and handset. Model 895. Was £129.99. £40 SALE PRICE £89.99

BT Cordless Telephone with Digital Answering Machine — Fully digital answer machine – no need for tapes. Model FREESTYLE 1100. Was £309.99. Was 99.99. £15 CURRYS PRICE £94.99

HAGENUK Digital Cordless Phone — Reception as good as a wired phone. Model HOMEHANDY. Was £130.99. Was £129.99. £20 CURRYS PRICE £119.99

BT Digital Cordless Telephone — Digital speech quality; 10 number memory. Model DIVERSE 1010. Was £179.99. Was £159.99. £30 CURRYS PRICE £149.99

PHILIPS Digital Cordless Phone with Built-in Digital Answer Machine — Reception as good as a wired phone; 25 number memory. Model XALIO VOX. Was £249.99. £50 CURRYS PRICE £199.99

BT Digital Cordless Telephone with Digital Answering Machine — DECT technology for excellent call quality. Model DIVERSE 1015. Was £249.99. £20 CURRYS PRICE £229.99

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SAISHO Telephone — Last number redial; Wall mountable. Model 211. SUPERB VALUE SALE PRICE £7.99

AUDIOLINE Telephone — 10 number memory; Last number redial. Model TB. 11. In-store Price £29.99. HALF PRICE WAS PRICE £14.99

SAISHO Telephone — 20 number memory; Last number redial. Model 471. Was £29.99. HALF PRICE SALE PRICE £14.99

MATSUI Speaker Phone — 13 number memory; Last number redial. Model SPEAKERPHONE 200. Was £19.99. £2 SALE PRICE £17.99

GEEMARC Telephone — Available in Pearl, Green or Burgundy. Model ALOHA. Was £24.99. £5 SALE PRICE £19.99

GEEMARC Telephone — Colourful design; Last number redial. Model FLORENTEEN. Was £19.99. SAVE £5 SALE PRICE £14.99



BT Cordless Telephone — Paging facility; 10 number memory. Model FREESTYLE 80. Was £59.99. CURRYS PRICE £54.99

SAVE £15

BT Answering Machine — 15 minute record time; Message indicator. Model RESPONSE 5. Was £29.99. SAVE £5 SALE PRICE £24.99

ANSWER PHONES SAVE UP TO £10

BETACOM Answering Machine — Remote access facility; Message counter. Model SOLO. Was £18.99. SAVE £1. SUPERB VALUE SALE PRICE £17.99

GEEMARC Digital Answer Machine — Fully digital – no need for tapes; Call screening. Model 7010. Was £39.99. £10 CURRYS PRICE £29.99

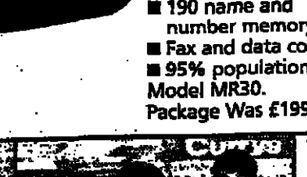
MATSUI Telephone/ Digital Answering Machine — Remote access facility; Memo recording facility. Model TD9000. Was £39.99. £5 SALE PRICE £34.99

BT Telephone/Answer Machine — 10 number memory; 15 minutes recording time. Model RESPONSE 110. £5 SALE PRICE £34.99

BT Digital Answering Machine — Fully digital – no need for tapes; Message timefstate stamp. Model RESPONSE 60. Was £44.99. £5 SALE PRICE £39.99

BT Telephone/Digital Answering Machine — Fully digital – no need for tapes. Model RESPONSE 120. Was £69.99. £10 SALE PRICE £59.99

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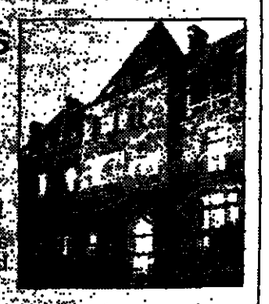
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Iraq 'making Libyan arms'

Ian Black
Diplomatic Editor

LIBYA is accused of secretly trying to develop weapons of mass destruction, including a biological warfare capability being produced with the help of Iraqi scientists.

According to reports attributed to Western intelligence agencies, Libya's leader, Colonel Muammar Gadafy, is involved in a joint enterprise with President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, as pressure is maintained on Baghdad to give up its banned weapons.

The United States, Britain, and other Western governments have long warned that Libya may be trying to emulate Iraq's secret programmes. But evidence is hard to find and there have been misinterpretations of intelligence amid Libyan accusations of black propaganda.

The latest suggestion is that Iraqi scientists are working in Libya because United Nations weapons inspections — at the heart of the standoff between Baghdad and the UN — make it harder for President Saddam to pursue his programmes.

Libya's biological warfare programme is codenamed Ibn Hayan, well-placed sources confirmed last night, but though large numbers of Iraqis live in Libya none has been positively identified as a scientist working on secret projects. Both countries have researched and produced anthrax and the botulism agent.

Officials say Libya does not have the capacity for "weaponisation" — delivering biological or chemical weapons by missile — a priority for the more advanced Iraqis. Colonel Gadafy's interest is assumed to be for terrorist purposes, though his record in that sphere has much improved recently.

Reports of co-operation between these two "pariah" regimes cap a long history of Libyan attempts to acquire banned weapons. In the 1980s blister and nerve agents were produced at Rabta, but Tripoli later insisted that the plant had been converted to pharmaceutical production.

Recently there have been disagreements between Western intelligence agencies over a tunnel at Tarhuna, which the Libyans insist is part of the Great Man Made River project, but which US and British intelligence believe may conceal weapons production.

UN inspectors have established an elaborate pattern of concealment by Iraq and are convinced that President Saddam will do whatever he can to preserve his capabilities. "Making deals so Iraqi scientists can contine their work elsewhere is entirely credible," said one diplomat.

But other Western sources say that earlier reports of Iraqi chemical warfare expertise being used against rebels in Sudan have never been corroborated.

According to the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Libya is one of at least seven countries trying to produce biological weapons. The others are China, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt and Russia, though all have signed a 1972 convention against biological warfare.

Libya faces UN sanctions imposed because of the Lockerbie bombing, but can still import the dual-use agricultural, medical and laboratory supplies needed for chemical and biological weapons research.

● Iraq will resume oil exports this weekend under the UN-approved oil-for food-programme, the oil minister said yesterday.

The United Nations on Tuesday approved Baghdad's plan for distributing humanitarian supplies purchased with oil revenues.

Naval exercise sparks alarm in Mediterranean

David Sharrock
in Jerusalem

SYRIA yesterday led a chorus of criticism from eastern Mediterranean countries of joint naval manoeuvres by the United States, Israel and Turkey, describing the search-and-rescue exercise as an emerging military alliance.

"These alliances will increase the risk of divisions in the region and escalate the state of instability," said Syria's vice-president, Abdul Halim Khaddam. "No one will benefit from such alliances."

Although the US, Israel and Turkey said the purpose of yesterday's exercise, Operation Reliant Mermaid, was purely humanitarian, other countries in the region share Syria's concerns.

Iran, Iraq and Syria all have disputes with Israel and Turkey, and the US has been a constant provider of military and diplomatic support to both. The only Arab country formally to acknowledge the manoeuvres is Jordan, which sent an observer.

Ankara weathered strong criticism of its increasing links with Israel — which include the sharing of intelligence — at last month's Islamic conference in Tehran.

Turkey and Israel possess the two strongest armies in the region. Syria is so alarmed by their blossoming friendship that it is said to be attempting a rapprochement between it, Iran and Iraq.

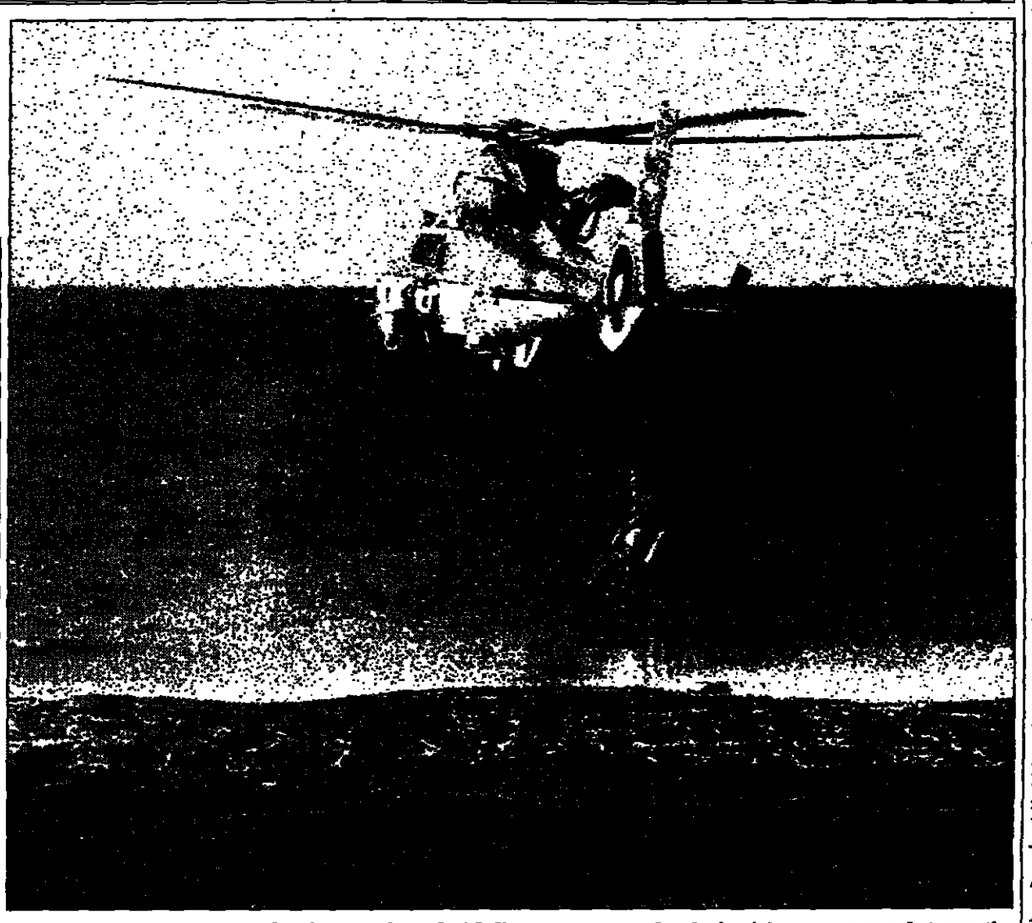
Signals that President Bill Clinton is preparing to engage the more liberal Iranian regime in dialogue have further destabilised the regional balance of power.

Syria is sandwiched between Turkey and Israel, and President Hafez al-Assad, too, is alarmed. Syria has territorial and water disputes with Turkey (angry about the Syrian aid to Kurdish rebels), and is in a state of war with Israel over the Golan Heights.

Greece — perenially at loggerheads with Turkey — is also concerned, leading Israel to organise separate exercises with the Greek navy in an attempt to assuage it.

Egypt is concerned that the US-Israel-Turkey axis diminishes its regional leadership. Cairo declined an invitation to observe the manoeuvres and its foreign minister, Amr Moussa, reportedly warned that the alliance could trigger a response in the region.

Admiral Hussein Khassawneh of the Jordanian navy said there was no threat to Arab countries: "It is a pure search and rescue operation."



An Israeli naval helicopter pulls a frogman from the Mediterranean yesterday during joint manoeuvres between the US, Israel and Turkey. 'Operation Reliant Mermaid' has caused uproar in the region PHOTOGRAPH: HAVAKUK LEVISON

Hack takes shine off Tinseltown



Christopher Reed
in Los Angeles

AMONG the guests of honour at Robert Redford's Sundance film festival later this month will be the 21-stone, red-haired, bespectacled figure of Harry Knowles — an Internet reporter who has been ruffling feathers in Hollywood.

His grinning, cartooned face stares out from a Website — Ain't It Cool News — he runs from the back room of his father's house in Austin, Texas. Although he only set up the site last February, it has already attracted the attention, and displeasure, of Tinseltown's moguls.

Mr Knowles, aged 26, has committed a cardinal sin among Hollywood journalists: he refuses to abide by studio rules of when and how to release "news" about forthcoming movies.

Carefully controlled marketing by the studios means publicists withhold access to stars and details of new films until they believe publicity will most benefit a film's opening weekend.

Mr Knowles has overturned that system with no more behind him than a college degree in television and film, and some unpaid entertainment writing on the Internet. He began last year by running snippets about early screenings of Batman & Robin, and Titanic, the £120 million epic that unexpectedly is becoming a box-office success.

Warner Bros partly blamed Batman & Robin's poor performance last summer on Mr Knowles's early negative reports of the test screenings. "cease and desist" from publishing secret photographs of the monster bugs from the sci-fi film Starship Troopers, another flop. He complied, publishing the letter instead.

His news derives from a network of hundreds of Hollywood insiders. Since an article about him in the Wall Street Journal in November, business has boomed. He estimates that the site is visited 250,000 times each day.

His assessment of the film was: "No matter how bad you have heard this film is, nothing can prepare you for the sheer glorious travesty of the 200-megaton bomb that it is."

Hollywood can turn nasty when people break the rules. Last year Mr Knowles received a letter from Sony-Columbia ordering him to

'I don't need the studios,' Harry says. 'They can't buy me off because most of what I produce is out of my control. It depends on what my viewers tell me, and that's what I publish.'

"I'm running a banner ad now on a new Disney pic, but I won't get rich," he says. "Just comfortable, and that suits me fine."

He will be on a panel discussing the film industry at Sundance, and New York magazine has commissioned him to give odds on the Oscars.

Having failed to beat him, Hollywood may now be trying to woo him. He was flown to Los Angeles to meet Bruce Willis on the set of a thriller, Armageddon.

But he denies being softened up. "I don't need the studios," he says. "They can't buy me off because most of what I produce is out of my control. It depends on what my viewers tell me, and that's what I publish."

He regards the orthodox United States media as "just horrible" in their obeisance to the studios. But he does not hate Hollywood.

EU row on Kurd refugees puts Blair to test

Martin Walker in Brussels

TONY BLAIR faces his first crisis as president of the European Union as the row over the threat posed by Kurdish refugees to the Schengen passport-free zone leapt to the top of the agenda of today's meeting in London with the EU Commission.

Britain is not part of the Schengen agreement under which nine EU countries are abolishing internal border controls, but its six-month presidency of the EU Council places the moral burden of brokering a solution on Mr Blair.

The problem is complicated by the row between Ankara and Brussels, after

There is a link between the new exodus of Kurds and Turkey's failed entrance to EU

Turkey's hopes of eventual membership were rebuffed at last month's EU summit in Luxembourg following complaints about its human rights record, not least in its dealings with its Kurdish minority.

Kurdish representatives claimed yesterday that the new flood of refugees was a deliberate act by the Turkish government "aimed at punishing the EU".

"There is without doubt a link between the most recent exodus and the failed admission of Turkey to the EU," Semsi Kilic, European representative for the Kurdish National Liberation Front (ERNK), said in Rome.

The chairman of Turkey's human rights association, Akin Birdal, said: "The Turkish state itself is forcing these people to this deadly escape."

A key objective of the British presidency is to repair the breach between the EU and Turkey and persuade the latter to attend the London conference on EU enlargement in the spring.

With France and Austria replacing border controls with Italy to prevent Kurdish refugees heading north, and Germany and Greece insisting on a full EU debate on the right of asylum, the EU Commission held its own anguished debate on the Kurdish exodus.

But the Commission agreed on little more than the need for all EU member states to ratify the Amsterdam Treaty, and then proceed to a common asylum and immigration policy.

"If the legislations of the 15 member states are not in concord, there are bound to be problems," the Commission spokesman, Klaus van de Pas, said.

He added that a new boatload of Kurdish refugees was reportedly heading for Italy's coastline.

The Italian government plans to pledge tough new controls at a meeting of European and Turkish police chiefs in Rome today. Hitherto, refugees whose applications for asylum have been rejected have been given 15 days to leave Italy, and Italy's EU partners have protested that tens of thousands have used this grace period to travel north. The grace period will be stopped.

"The Schengen agreement for open borders is not a sieve," Mr Van den Pas commented. "It stands for free movement but also calls for member states to take efficient measures to deal with crime and illegality, including illegal immigration."

The United Nations refugee body UNHCR stepped into the row, rejecting German claims that the Kurds were "economic migrants". It insisted many were fleeing a 13-year conflict in the mountainous region spanning eastern Turkey and northern Iraq that makes up the Kurdish homeland.

New year mystery of New York's missing partygoer

Joanna Coles in New York

WHEN Lawrence Andrews went out on New Year's Eve, his parents warned him to wrap up well — at -14 celsius it was the coldest night of the winter — and not to wake them when he came in.

Like many people living in the suburbs of New York City, he was planning to greet the new year in Times Square, where a giant mirror ball descends at midnight, showering the crowd with confetti.

As Mr Andrews, aged 22, and his friends began chanting the countdown to 1998 amid the pushing and jostling of 500,000 people they were briefly separated. Or so they thought.

Yesterday Jennifer Andrews, Lawrence's sister, spent the day in Times Square handing out 3,000 fliers headlined "Missing". Her brother never returned and no one knows where he is.

The evening had turned into something of a routine for Mr Andrews and his friends, who had followed much the same pattern for five years. After losing contact, Mr Andrews, aged 22, was spotted at 1am by other acquaintances from his home town of Brewster at the station, apparently on his way home. They stopped to talk about football, but he didn't get on the train.

The only detail which appears odd is that the last time he was seen, by another acquaintance, he was alone and walking away from the station wearing only a T-shirt and jeans. "He was drunk but he was in control of his speech, he recognised people. It wasn't like he was falling down or anything," said Daniel Stephens, senior investigating officer at Putnam County Sheriff's office.

On New Year's Day, when Lawrence failed to appear for a skiing trip, his mother contacted the police. Her son had no known enemies, no serious illnesses, no criminal record and no propensity to depression.

The Andrews have spent the new year ringing the city morgue, checking hospitals and homeless shelters. No one has a clue why their son has vanished. He joins the 12,000 people who, on average, go missing in the each year.

They will spend their next days handing out more fliers while police study the files of Patrick McNeill, a 21-year-old student at Fordham University who went missing last February. His body was found two months later, in the river near Bay Ridge Pier, Brooklyn.

News in brief

Germany proposes Algeria mission

GERMANY yesterday appealed to the Algerian government to allow international officials to mediate in its murderous conflict as further reports of massacres and refugee columns emerged from northern Africa.

A day after Algeria spurned overtures by the United States and European Union to investigate the spiral of bloodletting, the German foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, proposed a joint EU-Arab League mission "to search for a solution to combating terrorism effectively in Algeria."

Algerian papers yesterday put the death toll in mountain attacks since Monday at up to 300. But the official APS news agency said the Algerian security forces said only 62 had died and 48 had been injured. — *Ian Traynor, Bonn, and AP, Algiers.*

US brings tobacco charge

THE US government yesterday brought the first criminal charges in its investigation of the tobacco industry, alleging that a California biotechnology firm conspired with a cigarette manufacturer to develop high-nicotine tobacco. Justice department officials said DNA Plant Technology Corp, which develops new plant varieties, had agreed to plead guilty to one count of conspiring to violate the tobacco seed export law. Officials said Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp, one of the country's largest cigarette makers and a unit of Britain's BAT Industries, was an unindicted co-conspirator in the alleged scheme. — *Reuters, Washington.*

Canada says sorry

CANADA made an unprecedented apology yesterday to the country's native people, expressing particular regret for the "tragedy" of decades of abuse at federally funded boarding schools. "We must ensure that the mistakes which marked our past relationship are not repeated," the Indian affairs minister, Jane Stewart, said. Residential schools were a key element of past government's assimilation policies. Hundreds of former pupils have told investigators of rapes, beatings, suicides, suspicious deaths and humiliating punishments at the schools. — *AP, Toronto.*

Taliban massacre denied

THE Taliban yesterday denied a claim by Afghanistan's opposition that its fighters had massacred more than 600 civilians in the north-east province of Faryab. A Taliban spokesman, quoted by a Pakistan-based Afghan news service, said the allegation was an attempt to cover up an opposition massacre of thousands of Taliban prisoners in the north. — *Reuters, Islamabad.*

Warning over Chernobyl shell

THE condition of the sarcophagus entombing Chernobyl's ruined nuclear reactor deteriorated last year, increasing the chances of it collapsing and releasing radioactive dust, the reactor's deputy director said. Valentin Kupny said studies showed that a collapse was "more and more" likely. The sarcophagus was hastily constructed after the disaster in 1986. — *AP, Kiev.*

Sierra Leone fires on plane

FORCES loyal to Sierra Leone's military rulers opened fire on a Nigerian warplane yesterday, claiming that by flying over the capital Freetown it had breached a ceasefire deal. Witnesses and military sources said that the jet, which flew over the city twice, returned fire. The plane was from a Nigerian-led West African peacekeeping force based at Lungi airport outside Freetown policing sanctions imposed to force the restoration of the ousted president, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. — *Reuters, Freetown.*

Attacks blamed on Hutu rebels

AT LEAST 40 people were killed in attacks on two communes in north-west Rwanda on Monday night which local officials blamed on Hutu rebels, the independent Rwanda News Agency said yesterday. It quoted the regional commander, Colonel Balthazar Ndengeyinka, as saying the attacks took place north of Gitarama town. He said a large group of Hutu rebels attacked one commune with guns, machetes, axes and grenades, killing 14 people and beheading a local political leader. Some 26 people were killed in the other attack. — *Reuters, Kigali.*

Nigeria voices suspicions

NIGERIA'S foreign minister has told African diplomats that unnamed foreign countries may have been involved in an alleged plot to topple its military ruler, General Sani Abacha, newspapers reported yesterday. The foreign minister, Tom Ikimi, met African diplomats on Tuesday in the capital Abuja and was quoted as saying that investigations had shown "possible foreign involvement". — *Reuters, Lagos.*

Nasa shoots for the moon

LUNAR Prospector, Nasa's first moonshot since a lunar landing in 1972, blasted off from Cape Canaveral at the start of its year-long mission to probe the moon for minerals and water ice. The spacecraft was on "a voyage to rediscover the moon", a Nasa commentator, George Diller, said. — *Reuters, Cape Canaveral.*

Mudslides wreak havoc



A woman from Angasmarca, an Andean town in Peru, clutches her dog after a mudslide destroyed her home. At least 24 people have died in El Niño-inspired bad weather

Israeli corpse evicted

RELIGIOUS authorities in Israel have removed the body of an immigrant from a graveyard five years after his death because they do not believe he was a Jew. His family told the Ma'ariv newspaper that the unmarked grave at Beit Shemesh cemetery was recently opened by accident by the local religious council. He was ruled not Jewish when his widow was discovered eating cold meat with dairy produce. — *David Sharrock, Jerusalem.*

Sonia picks campaign spot

SONIA GANDHI will launch her campaign on behalf of the Congress party from Sriperumbudur, the south Indian town where her husband Rajiv was assassinated in 1991, a senior leader of the party said yesterday. She agreed last week to take part in the general election campaign. — *Reuters, New Delhi.*

Gucci trial date set

THE FORMER wife of Maurizio Gucci, the fashion scion, and four others were ordered yesterday to stand trial in mid-April for his murder in 1995. Prosecutors say Patrizia Reggiani Martinelli hired a hit-squad after Gucci halved her alimony. — *AP, Milan.*

هكذا من الأصل

Victims of jobs market

Child labour figures put rich Italy to shame

John Hooper in Rome

FORTY years after it joined the European Community, and more than a decade after it overtook Britain in the league table of national wealth, Italy still has almost 300,000 child workers.

This statistic — which neither the government nor employers have challenged — is based on research by the biggest trade union federation. Sergio Cofferati, head of the leftwing CGIL, produced the figure on a visit to India where Italy's prime minister, Romano Prodi, has been trying to open doors for Italian traders and investors.

'We estimate that in Italy nearly 300,000 children are made to work on a daily basis'

Mr Cofferati was warning of the dangers of buying goods from, or shares in, companies which used child labour. For example, Italy is a big importer of footballs stitched by children in Indian sweatshops. But the problem, he said, was not confined to the developing world.

"We estimate that in Italy nearly 300,000 children are made to work on a daily basis," he said. "Precise data do not exist. All we have are the figures for reported industrial accidents on which this estimate is based."

The biggest concentration of under-age workers is thought to be in and around Naples, where their wages average about 70,000 lire (£26) a week. Many children are employed in the manufacture of fake designer clothes and accessories. There are hundreds of small family businesses turning out fake goods on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius.

Other under-age workers serve in bars and shops or lend a hand as unofficially apprenticed motor mechanics. A recent industrial accident involved a Neapolitan aged 14 who was crushed by a van in a garage. The use of children as drug couriers is common.

The minimum working age in Italy is 15. But a recent survey for the employment ministry found that 30 per cent of boys between the ages of 10 and 14 in southern Italy were in employment. Investigations into under-age workers have an alarmingly high "hit" rate.

In 1995, the last year for which figures are available, government inspectors looked into cases of suspected under-age employment at almost 30,000 companies. Their suspicions were proved right in 11-12 per cent of the small commercial and industrial firms they investigated.

The head of Italy's equivalent of the CBI, Giorgio Fossa, agreed that the level of child exploitation was a "disgrace". But, he said, there was no comparison between Italy and India.

"It is one thing to deal with small numbers which have to be dealt with even so. But the situation in India and other countries in the world is quite another matter."



Some 3,000 unemployed people protest in Paris yesterday as part of a 50-city French campaign PHOTOGRAPH: PASCAL GUYOT

French government split on jobless protests

Paul Webster in Paris

THOUSANDS of long-term unemployed, many of them jobless for 10 years, took to the streets in 50 French cities yesterday to protest against national indifference to their plight.

Among those who gathered outside unemployment fund management offices in Paris, Jean-Charles Michel, an out-of work mechanic, said the Socialist-led government, elected in June, could soon face a deluge of frustration.

"They've been in office for seven months but priority has been given to immigrant measures like nationality and residence permits, despite the promise to do something for us first," he said. "Jobless figures are treated like nothing more than an inevitable monthly statistic. No wonder so many people feel let down."

The Socialist prime minister, Lionel Jospin, is expected to intervene today in the hope of checking a movement that was seriously underestimated when it began to take off just before Christmas.

Led by new militant leftwing "trade unions" for the jobless and the Communist-led CGT union, a handful of *sans-emplois* infiltrated unemployment fund offices in several cities, including Paris and Marseille.

Worried that the sit-ins could turn violent, luxury restaurants, hotels and food shops showered protesters with *foie gras* and other seasonal delicacies.

But the folkloric aspect of the protests has been overtaken by a sour climate provoking top-level clashes within the government.

"We are fighting for very specific help for people who have spent years being deceived by government promises," Jeannine Le Bornec, a former shop assistant, said. "But there has been a cool response from above and the threat of force if we don't get into line. I think we occupy about 30 Assedic [unemployment fund] centres now and more and more people are joining in the action."

She added: "Jospin and [labour minister Martine] Aubry have forgotten us, just as Chirac did and Mitterrand before him."

Workers at the unemployment fund management headquarters in Paris's 12th *arrondissement*, where workers' representatives and employers met to discuss welfare policy, were eager to show their unemployment cheques. About 1.1 million out of 3.1 million jobseekers are categorised as long-term jobless and receive a hand-out which drops to less than £300 a month after three years.

"The deep-seated problem is the older generation and the situation is getting worse because of government concentration on youth employment," a protester said.

"About a third of men and women getting assistance are over 50, like me, and will never work again. We don't have the pride of a job, nor enough compensation to enjoy a bit of leisure." Some 500,000 people out of work for four years receive only benefits for the poor amounting to about £210 a month.

One man in the crowd said he had a personal grudge against Ms Aubry, who was in the same job in 1993 at the time he was sacked, when unemployment first reached 3 million — 12.5 per cent of the workforce.

"Conditions for getting decent dole money get tighter every year," he said, holding up a banner which said only "*Ras-le-bol*" — fed up.

Ms Aubry faced stiff criticism from rightwing MPs in parliament yesterday. Her reputation has suffered since she made insensitive remarks suggesting that the *sans-emplois* protest was just a passing phase.

Minister urges EU plebiscite

THE French interior minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement yesterday backed a Communist Party call for a referendum on EU reforms, exposing differences within the Socialist-led coalition.

Mr Chevènement, who heads the leftwing Citizens' Movement party, said he preferred a referendum to a parliamentary vote on constitutional changes required for France to conform with the Amsterdam Treaty.

But the Socialist prime minister, Lionel Jospin, and the president, Jacques Chirac, want this approved by parliament. — *Reuters*.

Unrest grows in Indonesia

John Aglionby in Jakarta

DEMANDS for an end to President Suharto's 32 years of autocratic rule and outbreaks of social disorder are the visible signs of increasing political discontent in Indonesia.

The government's inability to control the free-falling currency and economic crisis is fuelling opposition and media demands for what would be only the second change of leader in Indonesia's 52 years of independence.

Leading the way is Amien Rais, a staunch government critic and chairman of the 28-million-strong Muslim organisation Muhammadiyah. He believes the only way to rekindle domestic and international confidence in the sprawling archipelago of 202 million people is for wholesale change in the March 10 presidential election.

"Look around us, no one is investing here," he said. "The only way to turn the situation around is to break the status quo. And the only way to do that is to replace Suharto."

Mr Rais points to rising prices, mounting bankruptcies and escalating unemployment — which according to some sources has risen by up to four million in the past few months — as the main causes of the crisis. "If millions of people are hungry, unrest will surely follow. And people will no longer put up with another five years of Suharto repressing them."

Discontent is already apparent. On Monday hundreds of shops and cars were damaged by thousands of rioters in the West Java capital of Bandung after a seemingly innocuous altercation between street vendors and public order officials.

Strikes are also becoming more frequent, particularly in the industrial heartland of Java, as workers protest against labour rights violations and job losses.

Other groups echo Mr Rais's sentiments. Yesterday the National Brotherhood Foundation, previously loyal to Mr Suharto, called for the former five-star general, aged 76, to step down. In very polite terms, it said Mr Suharto's age and health were against him.

"He has dedicated his life to the country for 50 years as a soldier and a statesman. We do not expect him . . . to carry out more heavy tasks," the group's leader, retired general Bambang Triantoro, said.

At the end of last month, the country was rocked by rumours that Mr Suharto had suffered a stroke and died, or been ousted, when he was not seen in public after doctors advised him to take a 10-day rest.

If he decides to stand again, Mr Suharto is likely to be re-elected for a seventh consecutive term. Indonesia's president is chosen by the 1,000-strong People's Consultative Assembly, which consists of the 500 members of the powerless House of Representatives and 500 people picked by Mr Suharto.

Students at several universities across the country have recently held polls on whether Mr Suharto should serve another term. None of the surveys has backed him.

In another departure, the heavily - constrained Indonesian media have started giving free rein to government critics. "The media are almost running amok," one diplomat said. "Six months ago they would never have got away with what they are doing now. It shows what a mess the country is in."

Vietnamese 'embezzlers' shot at dawn

Nicholas Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

VIETNAM delivered a brutally clear warning against corruption yesterday when a once high-living businessman and two associates were taken by police to a suburb of Ho Chi Minh City and shot in front of a crowd of onlookers.

Relatives and former employees were among several thousand people who gathered before dawn at a shabby field on the edge of the city to watch as three, five-man firing squads executed Pham Huy Phuoc, the former boss of a trading company owned by the Communist Party, Tran Quy Trinh, the director of a private company, and Le Duc Canh, from a state legal office.

The three were convicted last year of embezzling millions of pounds in a trial which served as the showpiece of a campaign by the Communist Party against the corruption rampant at every level of the party and government.

The country's legal system and arrest of political dissidents has attracted Western criticism. But yesterday's executions came as Vietnam won the thanks of its former adversary, the United States, for extraditing a Vietnamese man on the FBI's 10 most wanted list for the murder of a New York restaurateur in 1993.

Nguyen Thanh Tang, aged 29, was delivered into US custody in Bangkok on Tuesday after Vietnam received an extradition request through Interpol in August. Vietnamese newspapers have alleged that Mr Tang was also responsible for murdering his victim's wife and three children.

Mr Phuoc, a flamboyant entreprenur who once mixed with Vietnam's political and business elite, was said to have pocketed £6.2 million, which he squandered on a luxury villa for a girlfriend, gambling and lavish parties.

Mr Trinh and Mr Canh were charged with helping him to gain big bank loans to cover the company's losses by inflating the value of collateral put up to obtain them.

Officials at the city's Chi Hoa prison prison woke the three men early yesterday to tell them that the execution was going ahead. They were offered a last breakfast of chicken and steamed buns which they declined. Guards drove the prisoners to the execution blindfolded and gagged in the Vietnamese manner, with pieces of lemon in their mouths.

Eyewitnesses said Mr Phuoc appeared on the point of collapse as he and the other two were tied to the stakes, but he rallied when a woman in the crowd called out to him seconds before the firing squad shot him.

Moments later, in accordance with normal procedure, the commanding officer shot each in the head with his pistol to make sure they were dead.

Their bodies were then wrapped in straw mats, laid in simple wooden coffins and buried in shallow graves at the execution site. A fourth associate was initially sentenced to death but escaped with life imprisonment in recognition of his family's service to the Communist victory in the Vietnam war.

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Reform shelved till polling day

Ian Traynor in Bonn continues his series on election-year issues facing German voters by analysing the gridlock paralysing politics under Chancellor Kohl

EVERY year at this time, Wiesbaden's Society for the German Language rings out the old with a succinct single-word verdict on Germany's previous 12 months.

For 1997, the learned linguists intoned, the most apt description of the German condition was *Reformstau*, or political paralysis.

Socially, politically and economically, the lament continued, Germany was mired in inflexibility, with its system of constitutional checks and balances tipping into gridlock.

"Further delaying vital reforms will be extremely negative for investment, growth and employment," said Herbert Hax, the head of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's panel of economic advisers, the "Five Wise Men". "The suffering will have to become much worse to stop people clinging to their vested interests."

Mr Hax took a surprising swipe at his boss, charging Mr Kohl with failure to push through crucial tax, welfare and structural reforms.

But Mr Kohl was not listening. Exactly a year after launching an ambitious attempt to overhaul the impenetrable tax system, he yesterday gave up, announcing the project had been ditched until after September's election.

The tax reform was to have been the centrepiece of his re-election strategy. Its absence will be the keystone in his campaign to tar the opposition Social Democrats as spoilers. He ritually blames them for blocking his reform efforts, but after almost 16 years in power the buck has to stop with the chancellor.

For while Mr Kohl, through the dynamism of his foreign and European policies, may be perceived abroad as a highly active leader, the view at home is different as he presides over a society doggedly resistant to change.

The paralysis is not merely political or legislative, but institutional and systemic. Peter Struck of the Social Democrats argued this week that the parliamentary mandate should be extended from four to five years, to block permanent electioneering.

The generous statutory pensions system is widely seen as unsustainable; the supreme court is swamped by an avalanche of cases; the education system is in acute crisis. Moreover, the two houses of parliament are cancelling each other out, with the opposition leader, Oskar Lafontaine, marshalling his control of the upper house to stymie Mr Kohl's majority in the lower chamber.

Mr Kohl's small coalition partner, the Free Democrats (FDP), has been in government for decades and has held the foreign portfolio for 23 consecutive years. It brought the chancellor to power in 1982 by abandoning its coalition with the Social Democrat Helmut Schmidt, and yet retains only a figleaf of democratic legitimacy. The FDP has not a single representative in any of the six state parliaments in east Germany, including Berlin, and is represented in only four of the 16 state assemblies.

The dole queues are lengthening towards the official 5 million mark, with 20 per cent unemployment in the east and the real figure considerably higher. This is placing an enormous burden on the welfare and social security budgets and triggering a backlash among the wealthier states that threatens the very essence of Germany's constitutional settlement.

Spurred by the iconoclastic Bavarian leader, Edmund Stoiber, calls are mounting for greater regionalised variation in welfare and health service contributions.

Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg in the south are stoking controversy by calling for a new dispensation which would cut their financial transfers to poorer northern states, lowering welfare contributions in the south and raising them in states with higher unemployment.

The campaign is highly political in an election year. Both these southern states are conservative-ruled, while the losers would be those under Social Democratic governments. But Mr Stoiber's campaign would also wreck the key corrective in the highly decentralised federal system which allows financial transfers from west to east and south to north to ensure "social solidarity".

Bypassing the political and systemic gridlock, big business is simply forcing changes to the habits of a lifetime by laying off workers, divesting in Germany, investing abroad and letting the pressure of record unemployment build for reform.

Similarly in the former communist east, reduced to an economic *tabula rasa* by unification, the cosy consensual west German model is gradually being scrapped out of desperation. It may well be the east that pioneers more flexible arrangements for the west to emulate.

The rhetoric of renewal and reform is the leitmotif of the manifestos of all parties in this bumper election year. But *Reformstau* will be at least as marked this year as it was in the last. Only when the dust begins to settle after September 27 will Germany perhaps be able to brace itself for change.

Next: Kohl's European dream

Bundeswehr's boxer rebellion

UNDERWEAR in the Bundeswehr is not sexy enough. That's official. In the latest blow to German military pride, reeling from a rash of recent scandals, the top brass admitted yesterday that its standard-issue no-frills longjohns left a lot to be desired, *writes Ian Traynor in Bonn*.

To rectify this disturbing state of affairs, conscripts are to be paid to buy a little of whatever they fancy, consigning the stiff white cotton, which they have refused to wear, to the dirty-washing basket of history.

The taxpayer will foot a possible £2.5 million annual bill for this boxers rebellion, with each recruit entitled to a 50 mark (£17) allowance to make the Bundeswehr's underwear a little bit more wunderbar.

Mongolia relents on seized bibles

Irja Halasz in Ulan Bator

MONGOLIA yesterday said it would release 10,000 children's bibles it confiscated last year, as a goodwill gesture. But the mainly Buddhist country plans to hold on to a cache of impounded Christian videotapes.

The seizure of the bibles, shipped to the Mongolian Bible Society, sparked protests by European Union MPs and hundreds of letters from within Mongolia and abroad, officials said.

"It has been decided that the 10,000 books would be released as a sign of goodwill," said S. Badral, an aide to the prime minister, Mendsayhany Enhsayhan. "We hope foreign relations and co-operation will not be hindered by problematic issues of religion."

Customs staff intercepted the bibles last May under a law restricting the organised introduction of religions from abroad, which has been used to stifle Islam, shamanism and Christianity in Mongolia, even though the North Asian country guarantees freedom of belief. Mongolia's main religion is Tibetan Buddhism.

Mr Badral said the government "has to pay attention to preventing conflicts between religions".

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Bold, risky and worth it

Now Clinton should show support for Dr Mo

DR MO WON'T take no for an answer. Her determination to restart the Northern Ireland peace talks on Monday has led her to take the boldest of moves, a high-risk step described yesterday as *amazing, stunning* and unprecedented. Tomorrow Secretary of State Mo Mowlam will enter the lion's den of the Maze prison and talk to some of the hardest men in the United Kingdom. She will sit down with the convicted gunmen, bombers and murderers of the loyalist *paramilitary movements*, urging them to renew their blessing for the peace process. Dr Mowlam had a meeting in the Maze when she was in opposition, but none of her predecessors have ever done this in government. The doubters say it looks desperate, and they might be right. But *if the British Government* is truly desperate for peace in Northern Ireland, *then* there's no shame in that. As Dr Mowlam told the BBC yesterday, "I'm not desperate — I'm determined."

She has been driven to play this ultimate card by the loyalists' threat to break off their three-year ceasefire — so unpicking everything achieved by the *peace process so far, and returning the* province to the bloodshed and mayhem of the past. Her task is daunting: she must do tomorrow what ultra-loyalism's political leaders failed to do yesterday: she has to persuade the 130 prisoners of the Ulster Defence Association and the Ulster Freedom Fighters to reverse their bizarre exercise in H-Block democracy, *in which 60 per cent* of them agreed they had "no faith" in *the Stormont* talks. She has to reassure the likes of Michael Stone — the grenade-throwing, gun-toting killer who took random potshots at Catholics at Milltown cemetery almost a decade ago — that the peace process is not rigged in favour of their republican enemies, and that the option of a return to the old ways of violence is no option at all.

Dr Mowlam will need every political skill at her disposal — all the spirit, sensitivity and charm she can muster. She has those qualities in abundance, *even during this*, her toughest week since taking office. She showed her mettle again yesterday when she met the political representatives of the UDA/UFF for 100 minutes, buying the search for peace 48 more hours, if nothing else. Now she needs as much support *as she can get*.

David Trimble, the leader of unionism's biggest party, has offered his backing; he could hardly do otherwise since he met the Maze men himself on Tuesday. Still, it's worth pondering how Mr Trimble would have reacted if *Dr Mowlam had agreed to meet the* loyalists' neighbours in the H-Block: *the convicted terrorists of the IRA.* Of course, he would have condemned it. But, because the killers wear loyalist ribbons, Mr Trimble thinks it's OK. Perhaps the *Ulster Unionists* will bear *this in mind next time they accuse Dr* Mowlam of appeasing republican terror.

The Secretary of State has every right *to expect support from elsewhere, too.* Might now be the time for Tony Blair to place a discreet call to Washington? After all, President Clinton has been only to happy to claim partial credit for the peace process when it's been going well. Now that it's in palpable trouble, *he might consider an intervention: per*haps a message to all the parties, *reminding them of the commitments* they made to him in the White House, recalling the reasons why they signed up for the peace process in the first place. After all, nothing has fundamentally altered since those early days. The current violence merely provides further proof why peace is so desperately needed. Dr Mowlam will do something very brave *tomorrow. She needs all the* friends she can get — including those in *the highest places.*

Good management is the key

Could schools gain a lot from fresh business ideas?

PARTNERSHIP not conflict was how the new education experiment was billed. But there was little sign yesterday of fraternal goodwill in the reaction of local education authorities, teaching unions or parent-teacher spokespeople to the latest ministerial thinking on the Government's new education action zones. There were demands for urgent meetings with the Prime Minister to *stop "the privatisation of education".*

Until now, the idea has rightly had a good press. Ministers plan to established 25 action zones in deprived areas. Each zone will comprise about 20 schools involving two or three secondary schools and their feeder primaries. The aim is to experiment with new ways of raising standards in areas suffering from severe underachievement. Budgets will be increased by about five per cent with each zone getting up to £250,000 a year extra over three to five years to fund higher pay and specialist equipment. Local businesses will be expected to match these grants pound for pound. The emphasis will be on innovation. Zones will have the right to suspend the national curriculum, tear up existing pay-and-conditions agreements, and concentrate on basic skills. Until this week, the emphasis was on new partnerships involving business, parents, community organisations and local councils. But now the partners have learned that *some zones could be* business-led. Hence the fuss.

The critics are right. There would be a lot wrong if ministers intended to move education from the public to the private sector. The businesses would be unaccountable to the people paying for the service — taxpayers. Most business people have only the vaguest idea of the needs and demands of an education system. Education ministers should not be in the business of letting private entrepreneurs make a fast buck. And Labour is too infatuated with the presumed *wisdom of the business world.* Has privatisation improved the train service? Did the business directors save the Opera House? Hasn't even the business world conceded it made a major mistake on its own patch in downsizing staff and replacing experienced and highly-skilled workforces with short-term, temporary, agency-supplied staff?

But ministers are not trying to privatise the school system. They are trying *to give children a better chance. Let* yesterday's critics remember the huge numbers which have been betrayed by the current system. The inspectors' special report on deprived schools produced a catalogue of shortcomings. Of course there are some successful inner *city schools and as Michael Rutter* demonstrated, the key is good management (punctuality, coherent goals, well-defined discipline) and high ambitions. But let's explore some new ways. If business people come up with an intelligent plan, let's try it. Ministers have *only talked of one of the first five zones* being business-led. All yesterday's totally disproportionate fuss exposed was a sad inferiority complex.

The moon: a water diviner's guide

Even if a source is found don't expect it to be ready for drinking

FILL HER up fast, said the taut-lipped space captain, as he pulled in to No. 1 Lunar Hydro-fuel Service Station. It was the year 2018 and the moon was getting too damn crowded for comfort. Not for him the daily shuttle from earth with its gawping tourists and Strauss waltzes on the sensoscreen. He was all set for the big leap — to Mars.

The successful launch of Lunar Prospector from Cape Canaveral has revalidated countless volumes of science fiction by the hint that it may discover *hidden sources of water.* This would not only make a moon base possible but could provide the basic ingredients for rocket fuel, creating a launch pad for further exploration. Nasa's Discovery programme, of which this is the third launch, should be applauded. Freed from cold war showmanship, it concentrates on less glossy missions. Without humans on board, it can explore more adventurously at less expense.

The paradox would be if this probe really were successful in discovering significant quantities of water on the moon: then it would encourage a new lobby for the return of manned flight. The moon, enthusiasts are already saying, would become "the most valuable piece of real estate in the solar system."

But they should throttle back the excitement. If the radar signature recorded by the Clementine mission in 1994 does indicate frozen water (and only one out of the hundreds which it took *may have done so*) it is not exactly ready to tap. It will only be found in a region of *permanent darkness with a* temperature of 40 degrees Centigrade above absolute zero. It is not being replenished either but derives from ancient comets which once collided with the moon. Dream on, space explorers, but H G Wells and the Martian Tales will remain more fiction than science for a long while yet.



Letters to the Editor

A case of them or us in Ireland?

AS SOMEONE *from* Northern Ireland now living in Birmingham, I am forced to agree with my ex-MP — Roy Hattersley (She's doing the top job which I once longed for, January 7) would have made a lousy Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. He wonders why "they" (violent and sectarian) in Northern Ireland seem alien to "us" (presumably peace-loving and *liberal) in England.* He alleges that people there are killed because of their religion; the problem has always been political, not religious, and he should know this. Religion is used by "us" in England (and sometimes by "them" in Northern Ireland) as a shorthand to point up "their" political bitterness and intransigence.

There has been violence in *Northern Ireland for over 70* years because of a profound uncertainty over its constitutional future — an uncertainty which continues to *exist because the British and* Irish governments have continually failed to agree a formula for the future of the six counties. People in Northern Ireland want what "we" and "they" have always wanted — peace, stability and the preservation of *"their" national* identity, whether that be British or Irish. "They" are overwhelmingly *decent people*, struggling to find a future in the mess handed to them by the mismanagement of previous governments.

"Their" solution lies in condominion — a strong locally-elected assembly, *constitutionally recognised*, guaranteed for 100 years and supported by both governments. For national elections, the Northern Irish electoral roll would be split, allowing Nationalists the right to elect representatives to Dail Eirann whilst Loyalists continue to elect representatives to Westminster.

That way, no one loses face — or nationality. This is the only *viable long-term solution*; after all, who in their right mind would want to impose "our" nationality on someone who believes *his/her nationality lies* elsewhere?

Tom White.
131 Anderton Park Road,
Birmingham B13 9DQ.

ROY Hattersley says that he once longed to be Northern Ireland Secretary. Judging by his later remark: "the idea that the British Army is an instrument of colonial oppression is clearly *ridiculous", thank God he* never was.

When I was in Ireland, serving with the security forces, it was very clear that the British Army is in occupation of a sizable chunk of that country, against the wishes of most of its citizens. Whether you call that oppression or peacekeeping is immaterial; it has led to *the violent deaths of thou*sands of people, including my fellow-soldiers. Legitimacy for this dismally familiar colonial situation relies on the claimed sanctity of an 80-year-old artificial frontier which owes nothing to historical, social or cultural fact, and everything to appeasement by British politicians for short-term political ends.

Roy Hattersley went on to *persuade us even more of the* unsuitability of people with his mind-set to govern a hamster cage, let alone a powerful European country, with the bizarre: "it is impossible to watch the television pictures of what is now going on in Northern Ireland without feeling that 'they' are different from 'us'. We do not kill people because of their religion, nor do our politicians talk in such violent language. Troops are not necessary on our streets because we do not set fire to buses, stone policemen and bomb public *buildings."*

These events — these dreadful events — happen in Ireland because a colonial situation exists. Were Germany to have successfully invaded Britain *in 1940, would not the people of* Britain have reacted by bombing, shooting and ambushing the occupying forces? Only if Hattersley believes that they would *not* can he realistically talk about the Irish as a "they" who are fundamentally different from "us".

Only when British politicians accept that a colonial situation exists in Ireland can the tragedy be ended. Only *then will it be possible to* negotiate with the Loyalist population as a minority which has honest concerns that must be addressed, rather than as a majority with an inalienable right to power.

Meurig Parri.
Wern, Bryncelyn,
Talysarn,
Gwynedd LL54 6AB.

ROY Hattersley, writing of "them and us" says: "We do not kill people because of their religion". Sadly they don't kill people because of *their religion in Ireland* either. They kill people there because they are a different branch of the same religion.

Terry Mullins.
South Place Ethical Society,
Conway Hall,
London WC1R 4RL.

What it means to be a Jew

JONATHAN Freedland (*Let the people decide who is or is not a Jew, January 7*) *writes: "As a matter of basic* pluralism, Israel should grant equal respect to Jews of every denomination." Not so. As a matter of basic pluralism Israel should grant equal respect to human beings of every faith and of no faith, as *should all other nations in*cluding the UK (another of the many which do not).

Tom Beaton.
3 Dene Court,
Cambridge Road,
London W7 3 PD

I AM a Jew because I was born one, I am proud to be a Jew because there are millions of Jews who fought and continue to fight racism and fascism in all it's guises.

Please do not conflate me with Israel. I am proud to be of Jewish extraction but ashamed of what the state of *Israel has done and continues* to do to its neighbours. The Holocaust must not be used as a blindfold. Being a "Jew" is not important. Being a member of the human race is.

Ron Press.
112 Amberley Road,
Little Stoke,
Patchway, Bristol BS13 6BY.

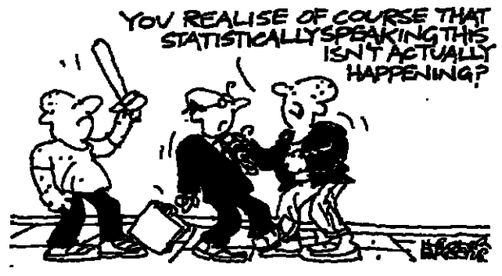
I WAS in Israel during the early years of its statehood and there was much discussion then on who was or was not a Jew. Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, a man of great common sense, was quite clear on the subject. "A Jew," he said once, "is anyone who calls himself a Jew. No one who wasn't a Jew would ever claim to be one."

Monica Wilson.
6 Garway Road,
London W2 4NH.

JONATHAN Freedland misses the main point about the story of Ruth, the great grandmother of King David. Ruth's conversion to Judaism is the model adopted by the orthodox rabbinate. Ruth was actively discouraged by her mother-in-law, *Naomi, from embracing Juda*ism. It wasn't until Ruth showed her obvious sincerity and commitment to becoming Jewish that Naomi agreed to Ruth going with her to the land of Israel. In a similar way, today, any applicant for *conversion to Judaism has to* demonstrate his or her commitment to becoming Jewish and not have any ulterior motive. This approach may be reprehensible or even antediluvian but it is based on the Bible story of Ruth.

Arnold Cannon.
25 Shanrock Way,
London N14 5SA

It's criminal



EACH one of the "facts" produced to substantiate *the claim that the "crime* crisis is a myth" (January 6) is highly contestable. For example, the murder rate has been going up steadily since the 1960's, the level of violent crime is much greater than supposed because of under-reporting both to the police and to polls such as the British Crime Survey. I could quote research chapter and verse to this effect, but my *main point is that it is mis*leading to substitute one set of statistics by another with*out being duly sceptical of all* statistics before drawing a balanced conclusion, or else one simply ends up in substituting one myth for another. In this case the traditional conservative myth has been replaced by the traditional liberal myth that crime is not really much of a problem.

From the point of view of the public on embattled es*tates, the battered woman suf*fering at the hands of her partner, the policeman on the beat and indeed the majority of criminological research, there has over the last 30 years been a crime crisis. It is not populism for politicians to address the problem; that the methods put forward to tackle crime are frequently ineffective, costly and some*times bizarre is another* matter.

(Prof) Jock Young.
Centre for Criminology,
Middlesex University,
Queensway, Enfield,
Middlesex EN3 4SF.

Chains reaction

I NOTE from your front page report (Misery for migrant millions, January 7) that following a riot in Bandung analysts have "discerned worrying trends: a willingness to fight back against police and a loss of credibility on the part of authorities."

Could I suggest that, far from being a worry, the preparedness of people to fight back is a cause for celebration. What is worrying is when we passively accept the vagaries of the world market.

Perhaps the 150th anniversary of the Communist Manifesto is good time to believe there is still a world to win.

David Bennett.
59, Arley Hill,
Cotham,
Bristol, BS6 5PJ.

DOES the fact that Tesco *makes no profit from its* sale of meat (Tesco answers meat price beef with an enquiry, *January 7*) mean that vegetarian customers are effectively subsidising the slaughter of animals?

John Loader.
6 Grove Park,
Fordham, Ely,
Cambridgeshire CB7 5ND.

Never mind the goodwill, feel the loathing

THE inclusion of the novelist Martin Amis in the Guardian's unsigned end-of-year-hate-list (Those we loved in '97... and those we hated, Decemeber 31) with the one-word playground explanation *"because..." — and nothing* else to justify it — prompts a comment in this season of alleged goodwill.

At least since Catherine Bennett's vicious description of Cherie Blair's face "contorted into that familiar rictus of bared teeth, wild eyes and leap-frogging eyebrows" (April 27, 1996), or Jeremy *Hardy's incredible observa*tion on Jeremy Corbyn MP that "he is so concerned about everything that you could smack him one" (September 28, 1996), the vein of infantile, and sometimes violent, spleen in your columns has gradually swollen.

Decca Aitkenhead, for example, recently made her own psychological state clear *enough by beginning an* article on Ann Widdecombe MP with the words: "One of the great things about British politics is the dependable supply of people to loathe. We knew the world we woke up to on May 2 would take some getting used to, not least the list of people available to hate" (December 17, 1997). *"Available to hate"? And for* what proportion of Guardian readers was she speaking when she used the word "we"?

Similarly, for whom was Jim White writing when he declared of Elton John that "short, fat, bald and ugly, all of us can associate with his lack of self-esteem, his self-loathing, his social gaucheness" (The Queen of People's Hearts, December 22, 1997)? "All of us"? And "self-loathing"?

On the contrary, there must be many Guardian readers not in the grip of these reflexes, and who can distinguish between joking and ear*nest, wit and bile, and satire* and empty malice, and I think they would prefer Guardian *journalists to keep the condi*tion of their own psyches to themselves.

David Selbourne.
CP 152,
61029 Urbino (PS), Italy.

Today the millennium, tomorrow Miss World

YOUR article about Tony Blair and the Seychelles (December 30) has just reached my desk. You state: "After years wandering the *globe as a social outcast*, the Miss World contest is hoping to become a resident of the Seychelles. The organisers are negotiating with the gov*ernment to make the islands* the contest's permanent home".

Since 1988, when we became a "social outcast" as *you put it*, we have been *to* Hong Kong, the USA, South Africa (four times) and India, during which time our TV audience has *grown to nearly* three billion in over 150 countries. If that is being a social outcast, then hurrah!

We are not, repeat not, negotiating with anyone for a permanent home. We have a two year contract with the Seychelles and a list of countries up to 2001 who want us to stage the show in their country, as the TV audience is arguably the largest of any *other world event. We will be* staging our 50th anniversary in the Royal Albert Hall in the year 2000.

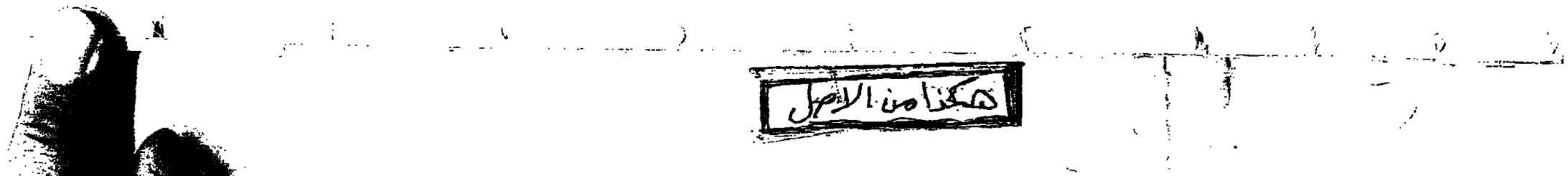
Miss World is British owned and staged. It was started in 1951 to promote the Festival of Britain. Those who are staging millennium *events might find this useful* in promoting our celebrations. The 1999 event in November/December 1999 could be an ideal promotional vehicle for our 2000 celebrations.

Eric Morley.
Miss World (Jersey) Ltd,
21 Golden Square,
London W1R 3PA.

A Country Diary

THE BURREN, IRELAND: There is, I think, much to be *said for the lasso. Recently I* watched a garden spider jogging around its silken web which was hung with raindrops. As I stood, fascinated always by spiders, bits and pieces of information gathered over the years came back to me, for example that the silk contracts under wet conditions, thus preventing the breaking of the threads; that of two strands with exactly the same dimensions, one of steel and the other of spider-silk, the latter is the *stronger. I knew, of course,* that spiders use their webs and silken cords to catch prey. Some species even manufacture a sticky ball attached to a thread. This they aim at passing insects, effectively lassoing them, thus leading us to the great question: who used the lariat/lasso first — cowboy or spider? Recently, in my home county, Wexford, I heard a true story of an appearance on a farm. Farmer Pat Kehoe noticed each morning strange hoof marks near those of his horses. He kept vigil and one night, with a friend, Ned Cullen, he managed to lasso a strange beast which, from its tracks, he'd thought might be a deer. Not at all — it was much stranger. Pat had lassoed a situtanda nyala, a native of Zambia! It *is the size of* a stag with straight 20-inch horns, bent towards the end. Pat has rejected many offers for the animal, the Kehoe family having become attached to their nyala, determined to keep him. He gets *apples, carrots, five* pounds of oats each day. The mystery — how did the nyala get to Pat's farm? Wexford boasts of more than the nyala. Near Wexford town, on the *North Slob* (with its centrally-heated observation tower) among thousands of Greenland white-fronted geese and wigeon, the rare American wigeon and green-winged teal can be seen. *"And still we gazed, and still the wonder grew"* (Goldsmith).

SARAH POYNTZ



هكذا من الأصل

Diary

Matthew Norman

THE soaring BBC career of Nicky Campbell, as chronicled in Monday's media section, has survived a test. Mr Campbell, who has progressed to Radio 5 Live's morning Magazine programme via Radio One and TV game shows, was at his station's Christmas bash when a female studio manager lurched drunkenly towards him. "Oi, Nicky," she said, "a few of them over there have had a whip round, and they've got together a £4.50 reward if I shag John Birt." (Birty was another guest). "There's £4.50 says I don't leave here tonight without John Birt. Whaddya reckon? How much you gonna put in, eh?" On and on this went, with Mr Campbell looking increasingly mortified as the young woman became raunchier, and more specific about her plans for the director-general. Eventually, showing the élan that made ITV's Wheel of Fortune so unmissable under his stewardship, Mr Campbell stepped in. "Let me introduce," he said to the studio manager, gesturing to the woman who had been standing silently beside him during the performance. "Do you know Mrs Birt?"

ATTEMPTS to persuade Lady Olga Maitland to join the Diary progress. Before becoming MP for Sutton, Olga was Sunday Express gossip columnist (it was she, you recall, who exclusively revealed, in 1977, that the Duke of Devonshire bought a new medium texture toothbrush) and she is keen to resume her career, judging by her meeting with my colleague Simon Bowers at a party on Monday. "Are you the one who keeps offering me ludicrous jobs?" she asked, coquettishly, adding that she wants "to see more blue blood in the Guardian, and I will come to lunch to discuss this further".

FROM a big money signing, touch wood, of tomorrow to one of today . . . Anne McElvoy has joined the Independent on Sunday as deputy editor. Although she recently held the same post at the Spectator, Anne's New Labour contacts make her a splendid catch for Rosie Boycott's crusading title: she is, of course, Mandy Madelson's number one disco companion, and the two are planning to record a remake of the Travolta-Newton classic Your The One That I Want in the spring in time for the 1998 Chrismas single market, according to music industry rumour. With the permission of Anne's new husband Martin Ivens (yet another deputy editor, this time of the Sunday Times), we will be sending Anne a family-sized pack of Rizzla papers, in lieu of the traditional flowers.

HARVEY Cole writes from Winchester to congratulate Haymarket Publishing on its thoughtful attention to cash flow. He encloses a remittance advice form he received first on October 2 for a magazine called Planning. "This renewal notice," it says, "requires your immediate action" — a debatable point, since the money is not, in fact, due until tomorrow, but one of which he was then reminded every fortnight. Mr Cole wonders how many people were persuaded by this to pay up long before necessary. Very few, we hope, if any. Anyone still to pay, meanwhile, is advised to buy themselves a little time, by filling in the cheque with the wrong name (why not try Hayfever?) the wrong amount, and — that old January stand-by — the wrong year. No one from Haymarket will complain, since these are the delaying tactics the firm's owner, Michael Heseltine, recently boasted of using when starting out in business himself.

THE Isleworth and Syon School Drugs Awareness Diary (developed in conjuction with the Metropolitan police in Chiswick) arrives, and before heading for pages on cannabis and other drugs, we turn expectantly to the introduction. "Such is the success of last year's diary that it has been endorsed by the Home Secretary Jack Straw, who recently visited Isleworth and Syon to view our Drugs Education Programme," it declares, "and whose son now has a copy of the diary."



Why Basil Hume must resist this seduction

Commentary

Hugo Young

IN mainland Britain, Roman Catholics aren't an excluded sect. Unlike the province across the water, Britain is a place that tolerates mimorities, especially religious ones. Perhaps it's one of the consolations for being an irreligious country, that these differences hardly matter. The terror of minoritisation, and the distorted furies this unleashes, is one, if only one, of the visceral impulses that have made Northern Ireland so resistant to sweet British reason, now perilously re-born in the person of Mo Mowlam.

But Catholics in Britain have also, always, been outsiders. No longer excluded, but for ever slightly alien. That's the nature of the Church here. The persecution of the Reformation elided, after brief and bloody interludes of ascendancy, into an existence that was tolerated but under-privileged, and then, after 1850, emancipated but, *au fond*, dissenting. Growing up in a Catholic school, I learned, with more clarity than I would now dare entertain, which side in all these struggles was the right one. I also absorbed and relished the sidelong stance, the somewhat distanced obliqueness as regards the established state, which the Catholic inheritance conferred.

For other Catholics, such alienness was disturbing. They yearned for acceptance, and suspected their faith would preclude it for ever. Early in the 1970s, when the cabinet secretary, the editor of The Times and the director-general of the BBC all turned out, by some oversight, to be Catholics at the same time, the coincidence appeared to offer miraculous proof, akin to the stigmata, that the body politic had changed its nature, and Catholicism was to all intents and purposes equal with the Church of England.

Not long after that, the Pope appointed a new Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, who is now being touted to advance still further the progress of Catholicism into the unholy bosom of the establishment. The year began with an orchestrated campaign to have Basil Hume received into the House of Lords. It's an idea that shows a seminal misunderstanding of both English Catholicism and, I trust, the man himself.

It is not a new idea. I've heard that every prime minister since Jim Callaghan, whose arrival at the top in 1976 exactly coincided with the Cardinal's, has put out feelers to a man they all regard as exceptional. John Major was very keen. Why not join the 26 Anglican bishops who embody the established Church in the upper House? Catholic dukes and barons, supplemented by the new star of unmuzzled righteousness, Ann Widdecombe, are now once again pushing a cause which the New Millennial Spirituality of New Labour will keenly embrace. I have every hope that, even if Canon Law didn't outlaw such ventures into the legislature, Cardinal Hume will resist it.

It would be a fatal comedown. Here's a man who has earned the right to speak from any platform he chooses. Every newspaper will print whatever he wants to say, every channel conduct any interview he offers. Why is this? Largely because he says rather little, and says it with fearless independence. Tainted by no trace of official politics, he speaks for the spirit, grounded in faith. He rents no quotes, has no role as sermoniser-laureate. He can still preach with rather terrifying austerity, more so, in fact, than when he was a younger man. He is what he always was, only older. Nobody in public life has been less damaged by the experience, least of all one who has been there for 22 years without a break.

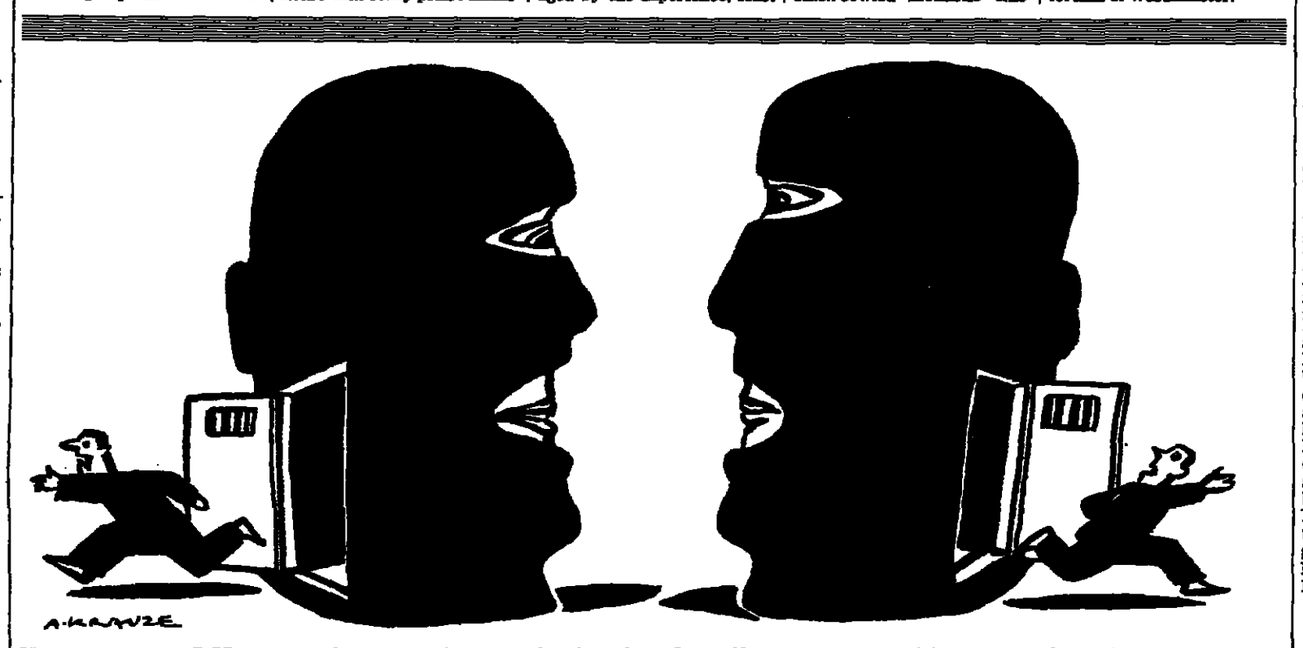
So he scarcely needs the House of Lords. The "special resonance" by which Lord Jakobovits, the Jewish leader, urges him to be attracted, is utterly empty, compared with what he has now. What need has he of pomp or title? He has spent his red-hatted years successfully discarding the worst excrescences that go with the job, and politely resisting the allurements that establishment society is so anxious to bestow on so unusually wise a figure. Bridging the two main traditions of English Catholicism, deriving from the recusant upper class and Irish immigration respectively, he has taken uninvented care to reflect, in his discourse, the needs of the masses quite as much as the élite. Indeed, like a proper Christian, he convincingly sees no rank between them.

Entering the peerage would be such a betrayal of this social ecumenism that I cannot believe Hume would even contemplate it. But it would be succumbing, as well, on a larger scale than the personal. It would relinquish the outsider status which is the key to the role that the Catholic Church occupies in British — certainly English — secular society. And who originally taught me this? The cardinal himself, whom I was fortunate enough to know before he got the red hat, in his black-cowled monastic existence as a teacher of British and European history.

> Nobody in public life has been less damaged by the experience, so he scarcely needs the House of Lords

To the Duke of Norfolk, who has pressed the case the longest, it seems only fitting that the local head of his own Church should take a position alongside the princes of what used to be called the enemy. It would do something to even up a 500-year contest. The Duke may be further moved by the prospect of himself being evicted from the legislature when the Labour Government gets around to its promised summary execution of the powers of hereditary peers. As the Catholic layman of most ancient lineage, sometimes designated "leading", he will no longer have a voice in the chamber. There can't be many Catholics who see the Duke, any more than another of his noble co-religionists, as a person qualified to speak for them. But maybe it's understandable that he should consider this, the second House, the apotheosis from which the Church's message should go out.

That is a fallacy which the Cardinal's resistance of all seductions will surely continue to expose. Neither he nor his Church needs a political platform from which to speak, even about politics. They send political messages from time to time, the more impressive for being spoken from beyond the official world. Their very independence from any artefact of government is what can give these utterances an unsettling, and therefore more potent, effect. But their spiritual impact is what counts, and comes with greater force from a man not encumbered by the empty resonance, the sickly official embrace, of being one of the Lords Spiritual. In a time of consensus and correctness, the unco-opted voice of the outsider with moral rasp has an audience which is unreachable from the tired forums of Westminster.



Brendan O'Leary has a plan to help the fragile peace in Ulster

Free the gunmen

IN THE present crisis at the Irish peace talks, Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam has ruled out an extended programme of releasing jailed paramilitaries on two grounds.

The first is that it would be inappropriate in the light of recent events. That presumably means the killing of Billy Wright, the leader of the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF), by three members of the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), and the ensuing revenge-killings carried out by the LVF. The second is that it would be giving in to blackmail.

Arguably the Government's response is perverse. Aside from jeopardising the three years of ceasefires, the official Governmental position in effect assists the ambitions of those republicans (within the INLA and the Army Continuity Council) and those loyalists (within the LVF) who want to see a return to full-scale ethno-national war. They want to achieve their goal by bringing the larger paramilitary organisations of their respective co-nationals back into armed conflict.

In short, the Government's approach makes it more likely that a full-scale return to loyalist assassinations will produce a "defensive", ie a murderous response, from the Provisional IRA — just what the INLA would like to see.

There is a better strategy, and one that is now thinkable, though previously it was taboo. It is privately supported by senior figures in the Irish administration. This strategy would entail the rapid and systematic release on license of all paramilitaries belonging to organisations that are maintaining ceasefires, ie the PIRA, the UVF and the UDA (including the Red Hand Commandos).

Prisoners would be released on two understandings. If they re-offended they would return to serve their existing sentence, plus any new sentence for their most recent offence. And if their organisation broke its ceasefire then they and all their comrades would return to jail.

The political and military thinking behind this strategy is straightforward. It is better to have the prisoners as "hostages" in their communities, with an interest in sustaining the ceasefires, than to have them as combustible materials igniting their more militant colleagues outside the jails.

Their organisations, with exceptions noted, have demonstrated a significant and disciplined commitment to their ceasefires, and it would be sensible to reward them for this conduct rather than to continue to punish them along with those paramilitaries whose organisations have not called for ceasefires.

It is also a strategy for splitting the extremists. It rewards those who engage in electoral politics, have mandates and have organised ceasefires, and punishes those who refuse electoral politics, have no mandates, and wish to fight to the finish.

LASTLY, it eases matters at the negotiating tables. The newly responsible republicans and loyalists will have a very decided interest in a political settlement — the continued freedom of their former prisoners.

The obvious and understandable objection to this strategy is that it frees convicted murderers and ignores the feelings of victims. The first point is true; the second need not be. Victims and their relatives have mixed feelings. Many of them would accept such a strategy if it worked, ie if it prevented any further victims, or, indeed, if it significantly reduced the number of future victims.

My argument is that it would work because there would be strong incentives for good behaviour on the part of the released paramilitaries. Work done by the Northern Ireland Care and Resettlement of Offenders organisation demonstrates a very low rate of recidivism amongst former loyalist and republican prisoners, which suggests that this alternative strategy could work.

Lastly, this strategy has one great virtue: it is reversible. If the paramilitaries abuse the trust placed in them then the British state has the capacity to send them back to jail.

Yes, this strategy is risky, but effective conflict-resolution requires leaps in imagination and big confidence-building measures.

Brendan O'Leary is professor of political science at the LSE and was an adviser to Labour on Northern Ireland, 1988-1996

The censorship must stop

Richard Norton-Taylor

FOUR years ago, with great fanfare, the Conservative Government announced a policy of openness. William Waldegrave, the minister responsible, promised that in future, emphasis would be placed "firmly on release rather than retention" of public records. The royal family's records, traditionally exempt even from the normal "30-year rule", would be treated in the same way. The Queen, said Waldegrave, had agreed "without demur".

From time to time, the Conservative government then proudly published lists of released documents — previously withheld for well over 30 years on the grounds they were exceptionally sensitive and their disclosure would undermine national security. Once released, it became clear they had been suppressed for so long, not because of national security but out of embarrassment. (Past ministers had repeatedly insisted that mere embarrassment could never be a reason to withhold documents.)

Some documents now released reveal, for example that a plot to assassinate Lloyd George, prime minister in the first world war, which led to the conviction of a militant suffragette, was the result of a set-up by the security services.

They detail how MI5 later monitored feminists; and how the police Special Branch could not understand Irish brogue when they tried to infiltrate the republican movement after the 1916 uprising.

Other, later papers show how Churchill was embarrassed by the antics of the defeatist Duke of Windsor during the second world war, while Churchill himself may have been prepared to do a deal with Franco's Spain over Gibraltar.

Every January, thousands of documents emerge under the "30-year rule". But a visit to the Public Record Office at Kew reveals just how fraudulent all the talk about openness still is. The 30-year-old files from the 1967 Labour administration on all the most significant issues and events are littered with pieces of cardboard.

On these are stuck notes signed by JR Green, Whitehall's chief weeder. The file has been retained, he writes in careful longhand, under section 3 (4) of the 1958 Public Records Act.

This states that "any records may be retained . . . if, in the opinion of the person responsible for them, they are required for administrative purposes or ought to be retained for any other special reason . . ." Whitehall is under no obligation to give a reason.

PAPERS withheld indefinitely under section 3 (4) including those dealing with the security and intelligence services. For example, all the files of Whitehall "counter-subversion committee" remain closed.

But so, too, do many more documents on many subjects. Most of the papers drawn up by a special committee on Gibraltar, for example, are suppressed.

What dogma or arbitrary decisions could have led to the withholding for 50 years of now-released correspondence at Kew between Foreign Office diplomats around the world? Though it occasionally provides amusing historical insights, the correspondence is notable merely for its elegance. It is not even embarrassing.

This year, one item shines out from a list of documents which remain suppressed despite all the talk of greater openness. It is a Treasury file marked "Finance files: royal family, general". It remains closed until the year 2011. What have the royals to fear from its disclosure? An embarrassment of riches, perhaps? Surely that would not bother the Treasury.

The PRO is not to blame; their staff take instruction from Whitehall, specifically from Departmental Record Officers. They are a law unto themselves. They can decide which documents should be sent to Kew, which should be disclosed, and even which should be destroyed.

There is a faint light ahead. The Government promises that under its proposed Freedom of Information Act, appeals against refusal to release documents could be made to an independent Commissioner. But in addition, Section 3 (4) of the Public Records Act must go.

The reformed flagellant of No 2, The Pines



David McKie

AT THE bottom of Putney Hill, there's a stern Victorian house with a blue plaque announcing that Algernon Charles Swinburne, 1837-1909, poet, and his friend Theodore Watts-Dunton, 1832-1914, poet, novelist and critic, lived and died there. I sometimes think these plaques could be made more exciting. This one, for instance, might say: "In this house from 1879 to 1909, a man who had once been known as the most outrageous poet in England was transmuted by a friend — who in some ways was more like a jailer — into a figure so sodden with respectability that Queen Victoria wanted to make him her Poet Laureate; the monarch being, presumably, unaware of the fantasies the poet had frequently written, depicting her as a sex maniac unable to keep her ravening hands off her ministers." I bet people would stop and read *that*.

That Swinburne in his youth was England's most outrageous poet — perhaps even its most outrageous inhabitant — is hardly disputable. The wild passions of his poetry, its concern with ambiguous sexuality, with incest, with lesbianism, his atheism and his republicanism, exhilarated the young and drove respectable people to lawyers in the hope that the courts might put a stop to Swinburne's obscenities. Such was the outcry which greeted his Poems And Ballads (1866) that the publishers withdrew it. What was known of his private life was another subject of scandal: his hopeless addiction to brandy and the scenes it produced in the homes of friends and in public places. Had it known the rest, Victorian England would have been even more shocked: his obsession with flagellation, the brothels where he pursued it, his pilgrimages to Yorkshire to explore the rich pornographic library of Richard Monckton Milnes, MP for Pontefract . . .

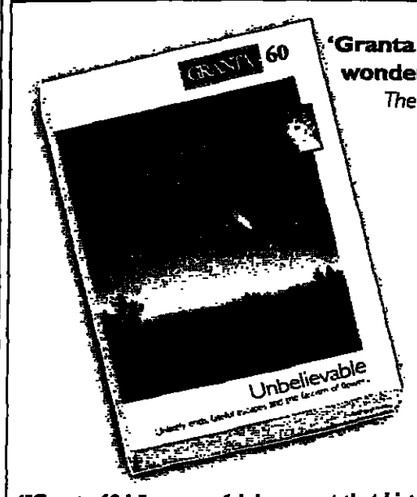
BY the time he was 40, his excesses, the brandy especially, had all but done for him. He would return to his long-suffering parents to calm down and dry out for while; then he'd go back to London and start all over again. After his father's death, his mother asked Watts-Dunton, then plain Theodore Watts, a country solicitor, to take him on, for a fee of £200 a year. Their initial encounter, as described in a lovely book called As We Were by the novelist EF Benson, was discouraging. Arriving at Swinburne's rooms, and knocking but getting no answer, the lawyer tapped on the door of the bedroom, where he found Swinburne, naked, his red hair flying, dancing wildly in front of a mirror. Before the lawyer could explain himself, Swinburne rushed at him, chased him downstairs, and propelled him into the street.

Before long, however, Watts-Dunton had devised a regime designed to reduce both the brandy and the excitement. Old friends were banished. Each morning, the lawyer would equip the poet with twopence. Swinburne would walk up Putney Hill to Wimbledon Common, where he'd stop to admire the babies being pushed in their prams by their nurses, cooing fondly over the children and complimenting the nursemaids. After a beer at the Rose and Crown in Wimbledon Village he would walk back to 2, The Pines for his lunch.

HE continued to write, but no longer in forms which affronted the decent. His political views swung sharply rightwards. The Queen, so often mocked in his youth, was now a figure of veneration: the Boer War an occasion for patriotic rejoicing. The distinguishing marks of his poetry — its throbbing passion, its shameless alliteration — were diverted now into controversy, often directed against writers like Whitman whom once he had greatly admired. A favourite target was Ralph Waldo Emerson. "Emerson," he once crowed to a friend, "will be surprised to receive the letter I wrote him last night, for I reminded him that he was a debilitated and now toothless ape, who, once hoisted into prominence on the shoulders of Carlyle, now spits and gibbers from a platform of his own finding and fouling." (I love that "reminded".)

The transformation was not quite complete. Behind Watts-Dunton's back he continued to write flagellationary fantasies. He didn't become Poet Laureate: despite Victoria's approval. ("I am told that Mr Swinburne is the best poet in all my dominions.") Gladstone took offence at the poet's political views and the job went to Alfred Austin, perhaps the most inept of many incompetent poets to be called to this office. He did, however, live under Watts-Dunton's stewardship to the age of 72, not bad for one who had seemed to face imminent death when just 40. Whether the sage, if cantankerous, figure who breathed his last at the Pines in the spring of 1909 was in any true sense the Swinburne who had so lit up the sky in his youth is a question too deep for philosophy.

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Johnny Coles

Jazz out of the limelight



A touch of magic ... Johnny Coles (right) with fellow Ray Charles trumpeter, Blue Mitchell PHOTOGRAPH: VAL WILMER

PERHAPS the jazz trumpeter Johnny Coles, who has died aged 71, was born out of his time. He played with Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Charles Mingus, recorded with Ellington and Herbie Hancock among many others, and was the star soloist on Gil Evans's classic orchestral album, *Out Of The Cool*. Yet his name carries little recognition outside the narrowest jazz circles, and as a bandleader he made a mere sprinkling of records.

In the 1930s there had been many exceptional trumpeters who lacked what it took to run their own careers, but had been looked after by the big bands. Two decades on, in a different musical climate, it was Coles who gravitated towards the surviving bandleaders and jobs that paid bills, but kept him away from the limelight.

Born in Trenton, New Jersey, he started playing at 10 — after pleading with his mother for a trumpet. He attended Philadelphia's Mastbaum Vocational School of Music and during the second world war performed with United States Army bands. In 1948 he joined Eddie Vinson's rhythm 'n' blues band and during the 1950s he played with other R'n'B bands including those of Earl Bostic — as did John Coltrane — and Bullmoose Jackson. But later in the decade, when not featuring in James Moody's group, he was taking solos with Gil Evans.

IT WAS an association that raised his profile. Already half-way through a series of orchestral albums with Miles Davis, Evans found in Coles another trumpeter who could exploit space. On Evans's exquisitely revamped version of *Davenport Blues*, Coles evokes the sprightly melancholia of Bix Beiderbecke in his own way. *El Toreador*, a fragmentary postscript to *Sketches Of Spain*, is up there with Davis's *Solea* or *Saeta* on *Sketches*. Coles may have lacked Davis's flair for drama and, indeed his sense of direction, but he shared the ability to place notes where they really mattered. Best of all, he again did it his way, his sound always drier, more austere, even when slurring a phrase.

Evans recorded the seminal *Out Of The Cool* in 1960. Featured on four of the six tracks, Coles dances across the band's gravel-blown interjections on *La Nevada*. On *Sunken Treasure*, typically Evans in its brooding progress, Coles hits every magic button, notably the sublime descending figure towards the close.

He then joined Charles Mingus who, with Eric Dolphy and Jaki Byard in his starry sextet, was off on a prestigious European tour. Not long into this, Coles became ill, missed out on most of the live recordings and never rejoined. In 1968 he made a couple of albums as part of Herbie Hancock's original sextet — *I Have A Dream* being one of his finest solos — while he displays on the high-voltage *Wiggle-Waggle* the range and power that eventually served him well in a variety of trumpet sections. Then in 1969 came Ray Charles's band.

It was in 1971 that Coles joined the Duke Ellington orchestra, staying until 1974. He then had two years back with Ray Charles. In the 1980s, he toured with Basie, Mingus and Tadd Dameron revival bands. In front-line jazz terms, that was about it.

The best of his own albums was Blue Note's *Little Johnny C* for which, significantly, his pianist-friend Duke Pearson did the organising. Of his musical legacy, a handful of solos still captivate. The Evans tracks remain catalogue items — Coles even has a glorious moment on an Evans arrangement for Astrud Gilberto. In 1989 he retired to Philadelphia. He was divorced, and is survived by nieces and nephews.

Ronald Atkins

Johnny Coles, trumpeter, born July 3, 1926; died December 21, 1997

Sir John Coulson

Integrity of the diplomat

IT WAS the last appointment of Sir John Coulson, who has died aged 88, which students of British diplomatic history are likely to regard as his greatest service to Britain. From 1965 to 1972 he was Secretary-General of the Geneva-based European Free Trade Association (Efta), which had been set up in 1960 by Austria, Britain, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, and later Portugal.

These countries were known as the "outer seven," in contrast to the "inner six" of the European Economic Community. At the time of Coulson's appointment, Britain's search for a wider European accommodation was continuing, in spite of the vetoing of Britain's first application to join by President de Gaulle. The search was also bedevilled by this country's continuing economic weakness. But the Efta partners saw, in the presence of a diplomat of Coulson's stature, substantial recognition of Britain's responsibilities to the association.

Coulson arrived in Geneva in the wake of the incoming Labour Government's imposition of an import surcharge which contravened our Efta obligations. There followed successively the 1967 devaluation of sterling and de Gaulle's second vetoing of Britain's application to join the EEC; the import deposit scheme in 1968; and the ultimately successful, but naturally Efta-divisive, third application. And today, as Britain assumes the presidency of the 12-country EC, many of the problems with which Coulson grappled persist, albeit in new guises.

Coulson combined his double first in classics at Cambridge and his great powers as a modern linguist with the personal qualities needed to become the ideal diplomatist. He entered the Foreign Office in 1932, and quickly made his mark.

During the war he served in the Ministry of Economic Warfare and the War Cabinet Office, and in the Foreign Office's department for post-war reconstruction. From 1947 to 1949 he was Foreign Office deputy to the British representative to the fledgling Committee for European Economic Co-operation — which eventually was to become the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development — and from 1952 to 1955 was assistant under-secretary for economic affairs in the Foreign Office.

In Washington in 1956 Coulson needed all his diplomatic qualities as chargé d'affaires at the time of the Suez débâcle. He had to bear the brunt of United States displeasure with Britain.

He returned to London in 1957 with a knighthood — "they have made a lady of you", he told his wife. He was making the transition from the Suez frying pan to the slow fire of grappling with the consequences of the creation of the EEC without British participation. He was appointed assistant to the Paymaster-General, Reginald Maudling, who was charged by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan with seeking the creation of a European free trade area, encompassing both the EEC as a single unit and its near neighbours.

THE enterprise inevitably encountered opposition from the EEC — especially France — and failed. Thus was Efta formed, and from 1960 until 1963 Coulson was Ambassador to Sweden, a leading Efta member.

After a spell as the Chief Clerk — as the head of Foreign Service administration was quaintly titled — he became the first administrative chief of the Diplomatic Service, a merger of the previously separate Foreign and Commonwealth Services. Once again his integrity and humanity were in necessary evidence. It was then that he was pressed into accepting the Efta secretary-generalship.

After retiring in 1972, Coulson was President of the Hampshire branch of the British Red Cross Society, and took a number of directorships. He was an enthusiastic fisherman. Corpus Christi, his old college, made him an honorary fellow in 1975.

He married Mavis Beazley in 1944, whose readiness to help and encourage others perfectly complemented his own qualities. She and their two sons survive him. A thanksgiving service will be held at Winchester Cathedral at 11.30am on January 17.

Peter Marshall

John Eltringham Coulson, diplomat, born September 13, 1909; died November 15, 1997

Carlo Bragaglia

A century of Italian cinema



Carlo Bragaglia ... dynamic

THE film director Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia, who has died aged 103, lived to celebrate not only his own centenary but that of the cinema. Though he had not directed a film since 1963, and in latter years was losing his eyesight and hearing, he was a lively presence at retrospectives of his films, organised in 1994 at the Locarno Festival in Rome and in his home town of Frosinone.

He dictated a witty autobiography *Bragaglia racconta Bragaglia*, and wrote two slim volumes of verse which were either dedicated to family, the women in his life and film goddesses or just as Fellinesque erotic fantasies. His memoirs were fascinating, not only for his anecdotes about the film people with whom he had worked in the 64 films he directed over three decades — most of Italy's leading comedians and glamour girls — but also for his reminiscences of the time he had worked with his brother, Anton Giulio Bragaglia, one of the key figures in the founding years of Futurism.

His rigid, provincial childhood was in Frosinone, a hilltop town in the Ciociaria province, south of Rome. It was the birthplace of other cinema notables like Vittorio De Sica, Giuseppe De Santis and Marcello Mastroianni. Later his family moved to Rome, where he and his two brothers went to school. Anton Giulio met the founder of Italian Futurism, Marinetti, in 1909. The Bragaglia brothers were immediately attracted to the movement for which they created *Fotodinamica* — "dynamic photography".

After being wounded on the Austrian front in the first world war, Carlo returned to Rome. There, his brother, Anton Giulio, had made two experimental films, and broken with Marinetti. The brothers founded the *Casa d'Arte Bragaglia*, which in the years after the war became a centre of literary and artistic life in the capital.

In 1922, Anton Giulio, with Carlo's collaboration, set up the *Teatro degli Independenti*, a focal point for 1920s dramaturgy; Pirandello was a member of the group. Carlo was business manager, and directed many of the productions when his brother was abroad.

He learned the film trade working in the late 1920s as a stills cameraman and in the editing rooms of the production company, Cinès, of which Francesco Bragaglia, their father, was managing director. In 1932 he made his debut as director with *O la borsa o la vita* (Your Money or Your Life), with a great stage actor of the time, Sergio Tofano. The critics praised its "surrealistic originality".

During the 1930s, Carlo Ludovico mainly directed star-vehicle sentimental melodramas. He remembered with particular affection, the now lost *La fosse degli Angeli* (Pit of Angels), 1937, a romantic story filmed on location at the Carrara marble quarries and anticipating, he claimed, the neo-realists.

He directed 20 films between 1940 and 1943, most of which are forgotten. But one, a 1942 adaptation of one of Eduardo De Filippo's most hilarious farces, *Non ti pago!* (I Won't Pay You), which features the great Eduardo himself with his brother Peppino and sister Titina in their original stage roles, is still enjoyed on Italian television. So is one of his many postwar comedies, starring the popular comedian, Totò, *47 Morto che Parla* (47 The Dead Man Speaks), 1951.

He remained prolific in the 1950s, at his best with comedies, but he also directed several mythological epics. In the early 1960s, heretired to Capri where he had built a villa — and his own tomb — to garden and write books. His last film had been a Dumas spoof, *I 4 Moschettieri* (The Four Musketeers), 1963, with Peppino De Filippo as Cardinal Richelieu. It was one of the Italian films of those years in which I played a cameo and my memories are of the cold and discomfort of shooting during the winter months in a bleak castle north of Rome, enlivened only by Bragaglia's way of making us feel we were all his guests at a weekend costume party in a country estate.

John Francis Lane

Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia, film director, born July 8, 1894; died January 4, 1998

Henry Charnock

The science of a life on the ocean wave

THE ocean science of Henry Charnock, who has died aged 76, spanned post-war work that explained how wind blowing over the sea makes ripples and waves, to leadership of complex, technology-driven international projects in the latter part of this century. Charnock helped define contemporary physical oceanography.

Born in Blackburn, and educated at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Charnock, worked as a government chemist testing respirators against a range of poisonous gases. He also studied part-time for a degree in general science at Blackburn Technical College. After being rejected by the Royal Air Force because of poor eyesight, Charnock joined the Meteorological Office in 1943. With the end of the war he took a masters degree under Sir David Brunt at Imperial College, London.

In 1949 he joined the new National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), focusing on evaluating the drag of the wind on the sea. Charnock pioneered the use of high quality, mast-mounted instrumentation to make profiles of the wind strength near water surface. In a brief but heavily cited paper, he proposed that over the ocean, the wind-stress in a fully developed sea is proportional to the roughness parameter, the "Charnock constant".

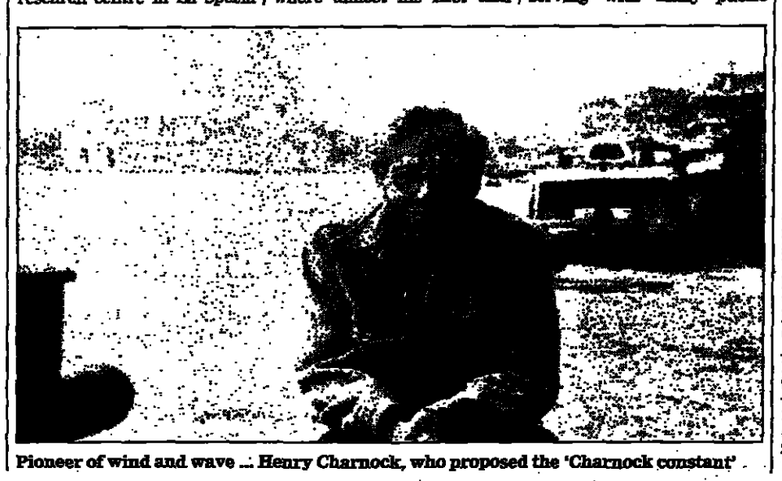
By the early 1950s Charnock was in Malta organising the oceanographic component of a study on the detectability of submarine wakes. In 1959, he was granted unpaid leave from the NIO to start an oceanographic group at a new research centre in La Spezia in Italy. His work there led to a fine atlas of Mediterranean hydrographical conditions.

Back in Britain, he became Southampton University's first professor of physical oceanography. By 1970 his department was closely cooperating with the Surrey-based NIO and, from 1971 until 1978, Charnock was the institute's director. He then returned to a chair at Southampton, where almost his first task was to oversee the highly successful International Joint Air-Sea Interaction Project. This involved 14 ships, three aircraft and the first oceanography satellite, Seasat.

In the 1980s Henry was deputy vice chancellor of the university, and president of the Royal Meteorological Society. He retired in 1986, but remained active as emeritus professor of oceanography, serving with many public bodies, and was until recently chairman of this country's world ocean circulation experiment committee. He had a long connection with the Royal Commission on environmental pollution and maintained an interest in issues involving the ocean.

In 1995 two of Charnock's former workplaces, the Institute of Oceanographic Sciences and Southampton University's department of oceanography, were merged as the Southampton Oceanography Centre (SOC), and his experience, wry humour and patience kept many of us sane as academia and civil service science were brought together.

Henry Charnock's wealth of knowledge, breadth of interest and sharpness of mind was a stimulant to all those around him, especially the new generation of scientists filling up the SOC. In 1976 he had been made a fellow of the Royal Society and in 1992 he was awarded a CBE. He leaves his wife Eva, two daughters and a son.



Pioneer of wind and wave ... Henry Charnock, who proposed the 'Charnock constant'

Rachel Mills and Harry Bryden

Professor Henry Charnock, oceanographer, born December 25, 1920; died November 27, 1997

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

A PHOTOGRAPH on Page 3 yesterday, accompanying a report headlined 'Lady in Lake' charge dropped, was said to show Jenny, Gordon Park's third wife. In fact the picture, which was supplied incorrectly captioned to the Guardian by an agency, was of Mrs Lilian Holmes, a former teaching colleague of Park's. Mrs Holmes, who is now retired, has no connection with Mr Park beyond this. We are sorry for the error and the distress caused to Mrs Holmes and her family.

ON PAGE 8, January 5, we described the Ven Pete Broadbent as a former chairman of the housing committee of Islington Council. In fact, he chaired the development and planning committee.

IN A profile of Jack Straw on Page 3, January 3, we said the first Aldermaston march was in 1959. It was in 1958.

A PANEL which accompanied the Page 1 lead, January 6, carried a heading, Crime facts and fiction, which confused some readers. All the statistics given in the panel were legitimate (none of them was fiction).

IN WHEELS, the Guardian's motoring feature, Page 15, G2, January 5, there was a reference to the FSA Polinez. This should have been the FSO Polonez.

ON THE Analysis page, Page 13, yesterday, we referred to Germany's Italian frontier. It does not have one.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Mayes, by telephoning 0171 239 9589 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Fax: 0171 239 9897. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

Jackdaw



Extra eggs

HOW do you decide how many children to have? If you are a female shield bug, it's a question of size.

Shield bugs are relatively unusual for insects in that some species guard their young from predators. Females defend their eggs and larvae by shielding them with their bodies. But their ability to defend a clutch is limited by the size of area they can cover. This creates a dilemma for the mother: should she lay lots of small eggs or a few big ones? There may be no advantage in small eggs if large eggs survive better or develop faster. But equally no advantage in large eggs if the cost is decreased egg number. *Less may well mean more, if you are a shield bug. BBC Wildlife magazine.*

Not that hot

WHAT is it that makes the idea of a hotline so ... hot? One of the most potent 20th century symbols of absolute power, the hotline has come to occupy a unique niche in the collective unconsciousness, somewhere between Lieutenant Uhura and the Roswell Incident. The difference being that hotlines are real. Or are they?

The first true hotline was set up by the US and the USSR in the wake of the Cuban missile crisis. The crisis required a rapid response, but despite the fact that they ran the most technically advanced nations on earth, Kennedy and Khrushchev discovered they had no means of communicating directly with each other. Shaken by how close the world had come to nuclear war, they ordered the creation of a direct, round the clock link, which came online on August 31, 1963. Sadly for our mental image, that didn't mean a red phone on the Oval Office desk.

There were two good reasons for this. In the first place, Kennedy and Khrushchev didn't speak each other's language, so there was always going to be a risk of mistranslation. Second, in terms of heightened tension, it's all too easy (as most of us know to our cost) to lose that caring, calm and reasonable tone — and the last person you want to upset is someone with their finger hovering above a button marked "Fire". *Printed exchanges give everyone a little extra time to think. Early versions of the White House/Kremlin hotline relied on Norwegian teletype machines, connected by cables and backed up by a radio circuit relayed through Tangiers. Cute maybe, but not quite as clever as everyone had hoped. Get me the president. Wallpaper.*



Bug-eyed ... about Wildlife

Gdansta

"THE biggest problem in this country is jealousy," says Poland's number one "gangstsa" rapper, Liroy (born Piotr Marzec). He's lounging in his lavish new spread outside the Baltic city of Gdansk. A silver BMW is parked in the driveway, and a fat *kielbasa* sizzles on the grill.

"People hate me," says Liroy, 26, with a bit of Brooklyn in his broken English.

"I've got too many [sic] money, and I'm living in a normal house, not under a bridge." The stocky, goateed Liroy — he looks like your high school wrestling coach — busted open Poland's music scene with 1995's *Alboom*.

Rapped in Polish but steeped in the styles of American heroes such as Cypress Hill and Ice-T, the BMG/Ariola release became the second-bestselling record in Polish history — eventually moving 500,000 units in a country with a population of less than 4 million. *Eastern Europe in the house, in Vibe magazine.*

Demon drink

DID you know that alcohol can be shown to emanate directly from Satan, who was previously blamed only for the hangovers? The chemical formula is C_2H_5OH. Cross out the O as equivalent to zero, and you're left with six atoms of hydrogen, which is element number 1, and two of carbon, element number 6. Six times one, and six, and six ... yes, 666, the number of the Beast, leers at us from the alcohol molecule! This proves it. Another famous beast sighting implicates a certain US ex-president whose full name is Ronald Wilson Reagan. Six letters in each name: the Moral Majority rests its case. *Fortean Times gives the origins of the Demon Drink.*

Act one

"TODAY we're going to learn how to react when an alien lands on your head — and I'm not talking about your agent!" grins irreverent Hollywood acting coach *Brian Reise.*

"We'll get through a gallon of blood on Hallowe'en! Why? Look at the biggest recent blockbusters — *Men in Black, Independence Day, Scream* ... In Los Angeles acting isn't an art or a craft, it's a business. You might have a real affinity for Tennessee Williams but that's not going to get you anywhere in this town. Sorry!"

"The roles that recur predominantly in TV and movies are doctor/patient, lawyer/plaintiff, cop/victim so you better start practising those now!" he pauses, squinting at the bemused ensemble of wannabe Oscar-winners before him: "How many of you have studied sitcom acting?" One or two hands are raised falteringly. He shakes his head. "Fifteen out of the Top 20 TV shows in the US are comedies," he informs them. *Leave the Bard spouting to Rada, advises Empire.*

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk.; fax 0171-713-4366; write Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Hannah Pool

Birthdays

Shirley Bassey, singer, 61; **David Bowie**, singer and actor, 51; **Phil Hall**, editor, News of the World, 43; **Prof Stephen Hawking CH, FRS**, mathematician, 56; **Prof Sir Robert May**, zoologist, 61; **Yvette Mimieux**, actress, 59; **Ron Moody**, actor, 74; **Hanae Mori**, fashion designer, 72; **Galina Ulanova**, former prima ballerina, 88

Death Notices

BOLLAG, Sigi, of Zurich and London. Dearly loved husband of Kathleen (nee Bowen) in Epsom on 5th January. Funeral service at 2pm at Ruskey Methodist Church in Ewell on Thursday 15th January and committal at Randall's Park Crematorium, Leatherhead at 3pm. Family flowers only. Contributions, if desired, to Imperial Cancer Research Fund, c/o A & E Longhurst, Ewell. Tel: 0181 393 1077.

PITT, Geoffrey William, died peacefully, 4th January 1998. Enquiries to H. G. Grinstead Ltd., tel. 01753 891 200.

WARNWRIGHT, passed away whilst staying in Waterlooville, Hampshire, aged 66 years. David Henry Edward. Funeral service to be held at Kingston Crematorium, Bonner Hill Road, Kingston, at 2.30pm on Wednesday January 14th. Floral tributes or donations payable to either The "London Lighthouses" or "Princess Alice Hospice" maybe sent to Mr M.G. Hosier, J. Edwards & Son (Funeral Directors), 19 St Georges Walk, Waterlooville, Hampshire PO7 7TU.

■ To place your announcement telephone 0171 713 4567 or fax 0171 713 4129 between 8am and 3pm Mon-Fri.

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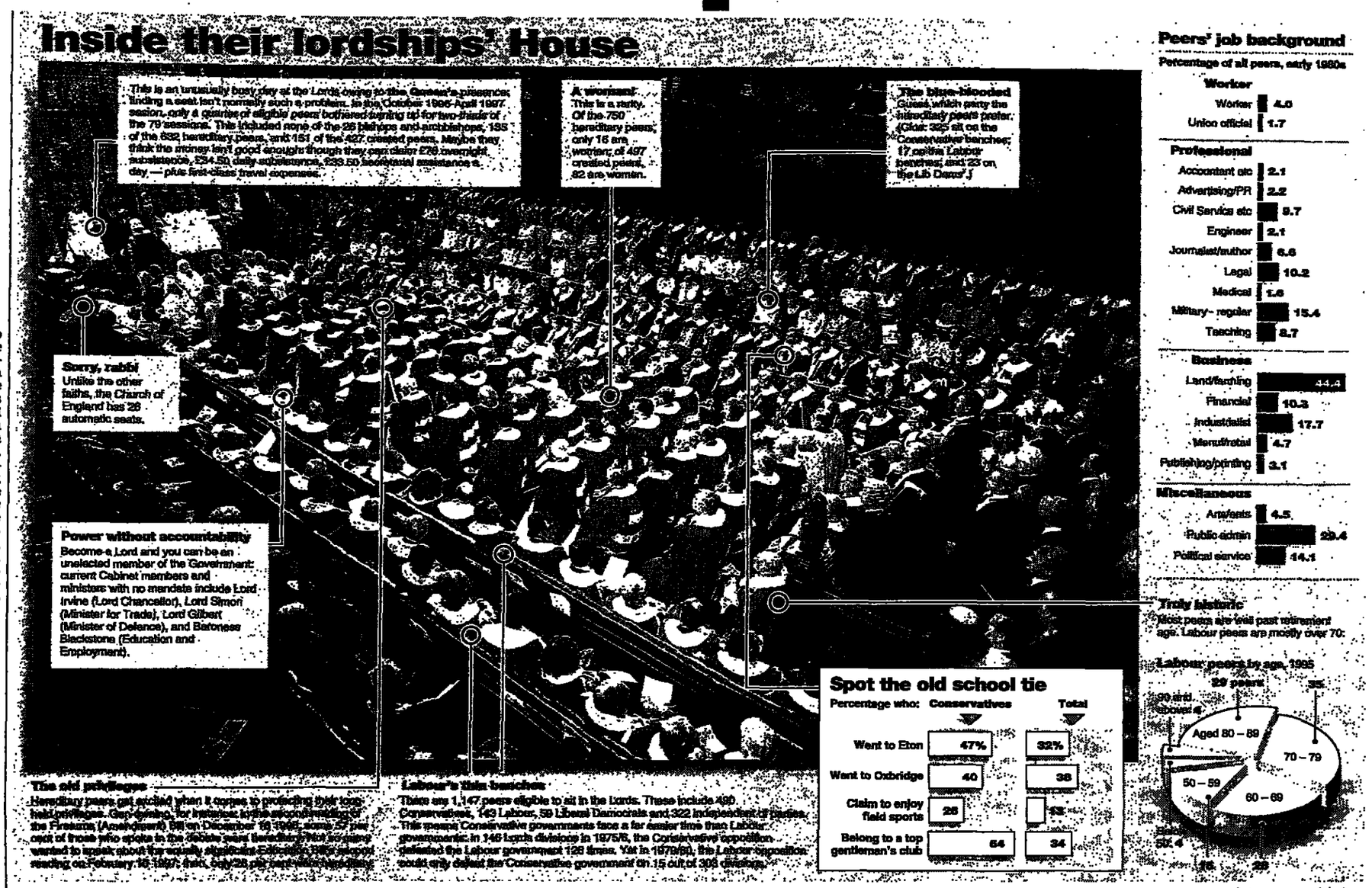
Analysis
Lords reform



Resisting a Cardinal error 9

The end of the peer show

Time's up for the Lords, not a century too soon. The tricky bit is what follows. These are the options. By **Ewen MacAskill**



HEREDITARY peers get excited when it comes to protecting their top-hat privileges. Gay Gaiking, for instance, led a successful rebellion of the Firearms (Amendment) Bill on December 18 1996; some 57 per cent of those who spoke in the debate were hereditary. Not so many wanted to speak about the equally shocking Education Bill at second reading on February 18 1997: then, only 28 per cent were hereditary.

THERE are 1,147 peers eligible to sit in the Lords. These include 490 Conservatives, 143 Labour, 59 Liberal Democrats and 322 independent or others. This means Conservative governments face a far easier time than Labour governments: in 146 Lords divisions in 1975/8, the Conservative opposition defeated the Labour government 128 times. Yet in 1979/90, the Labour opposition could only defeat the Conservative government on 15 out of 305 divisions.

TONY Blair has no sympathy for the Lords. Last February, in a speech ridiculing the Other Place, as MPs refer to it, he answered Lord Cranborne's assertion that the Lords were often in touch with the common man. What about the three generations of the Brocket family, Blair asked derisively: the *first had bought his title in the* early part of this century, the second was a Nazi sympathiser and hated Scottish landowner, and the the third was detained at Her Majesty's pleasure for making an insurance claim on some Ferraris he had concealed in a lake.

Certainly it would be hard to argue convincingly that the upper chamber is representative. Most people visiting the Lords for the first time will be appalled at the geriatric, slow-paced nature of the place, an old folks' home for politicians and Downing Street placemen (and women). And that is just the appointed peers. The hereditaries, many tracing back their right to a seat (and, more recently, a daily allowance) to feudal times, tend to show up only rarely for the big votes on in which they have a special interest.

But that may soon change. Labour intends in the autumn to start dismantling the Lords, with the necessary legislation in the Queen's Speech. Doubts have been expressed about whether Labour has the determination to take on the vested interests of the Other Place, given the number of failed attempts this century by both Labour and Tory governments. But Labour sources were adamant yesterday that this time they will deliver. "One way or another we are determined to get rid of the hereditaries — it is anachronistic, farcical at the end of the 20th century," said one. Another said: "If not now, when? There will never be a better time with the size of our majority."

Within the next few days, a new cabinet committee dedicated to reform of the Lords will hold its first meeting. Chaired by Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, it includes the Leader of the Lords, Lord Richard, the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, Nick Brown, the Chief Whip, and Peter Mandelson, the Minister Without Portfolio.

The House of Lords has its origins in the Witenagemot, the assembly of nobles summoned by English kings before the Norman Conquest. William I continued with the idea of an assembly of barons, most of them related to the monarch. Yet as a new millennium approaches, the institution appears unwilling to confront the current one: flick at random at the lists of peers in Vachers, the parliamentary handbook, and you will face an eccentric history lesson about how we came to be governed. Here is Lord Torphichen (family ennobled in 1564); there is Lord Vernon (predecessors there since 1762); and here, because of a decision taken in 1703, is the Earl of Stair. A bizarre political system indeed for "new" Britain.

BUT the system has its supporters. They argue that the chamber performs well its role in scrutinising primary legislation, often picking up flaws that have escaped the attention of MPs or able to scupper weak aspects of legislation that the Commons, because of the whipping system and party loyalties, has been afraid to touch.

The Lords also has a system of select committees that investigate all aspects of life. They take evidence and publish informed reports — although they have had little impact compared with their counterparts in the Commons.

The Lords have defeated various attempts this century to reform the House, most notably in 1911, 1949, 1958, 1963 and 1968-69. Now Blair's government has made its intentions clear — up to a point. "We will reform the House of Lords," Labour's manifesto said last year. "We will remove the right of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords as a first step towards a more democratic and representative chamber. We will consult widely on the further reforms necessary."

There is no argument about ending the hereditary peers. That is Stage One. The problem is over Stage Two: what to put in place of the peers.

Over the last few years, Labour's line has been simply to abolish the hereditary peers without specifying what kind of system will follow. This has provided ammunition for those opposed to reform of the Lords. Diehards, such as Lord Cranborne, Tory leader in the Lords who can trace his line back to the Cecils (who were influential in Tudor times), argue that what is left of the Lords would be unbalanced. It would, he says, hand even more power to Downing Street.

What the committee has to decide is the composition of the new Lords and the chamber's powers. Will they opt for something similar to the US Senate, an elected chamber that will compete with the Commons, changing the whole nature of the British constitution? Or perhaps a quasi-federal body, elected on a regional basis, a forum for the views of the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, Northern Ireland Assembly and the regions of England?

The shape will not be clear until the committee completes its discussions in spring. But it is almost certain that at least part of the new second chamber will be elected. Some in the Labour Party will argue that the whole of the upper house should be elected. Others argue that there is benefit in nominating members, so that politics can have the benefit of its elder statesmen as well as the views of retired soldiers, doctors and people from other walks of life.

This argument is popular among a large number of MPs. They jealously guard the power of the Commons and are reluctant to see the creation of a wholly elected second chamber that claims the mandate of the people.

A PLAN that will be studied by ministers in the months ahead is, surprisingly enough, from a former Conservative prime minister. Alec Douglas-Home proposed a second chamber made up two-thirds of elected members, with the remainder *appointed by Downing Street.*

Another good bet is that it will be elected by PR, as was previously proposed by Labour. The promise was dropped in the 1997 manifesto, along with much else about reform of the Lords, mainly because Labour took the tactical decision that it did not want to be diverted into constitutional matters during the election campaign as it had been in the 1992 one.

There is a consensus too on limiting the numbers to produce a much smaller chamber. The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, has spoken in favour of a ceiling, possibly of about 300 to 400. More difficult, and an area where ministers will argue, is over whether to ensure membership of the new chamber is for a fixed term. This would put it out of kilter with the Commons.

Next to be decided is what powers the second chamber should be given. The 1992 Labour manifesto was specific: "The replacement of the House of Lords with a new elected second chamber which will have power to delay, for the lifetime of a Parliament, change to designated legislation reducing individual or *constitutional rights." Labour* in 1998 is unlikely to be prepared to hand over so much. It will probably opt for the power to delay for a year rather than *the lifetime of a Parliament.*

Part of the final shape will depend on how the Conservatives react. Lord Cranborne may be diehard, but with a family in politics for centuries he is also pragmatic. Labour hopes he may be open to a deal. If he adopts a "we will fight them on the benches, the cross-benches and the lobbies" attitude, Labour may opt for a *modest programme, beginning* with legislation in the autumn to abolish the hereditary peers. Lord Cranborne could delay that for a year. In that scenario, without consensus, the Government would probably opt for a Royal Commission or a joint committee of both Houses to investigate what form the second chamber should take. Action would be postponed until after the general election.

If, however, Lord Cranborne is prepared to deal, Labour would go for a "Big Bang" in the autumn, with legislation combining abolition of hereditary peers along with a blueprint for a new second chamber. Part of the deal *would be to make only part of* the chamber elected. That would please Lord Cranborne, who would welcome the retention of appointed peers.

Newly ennobled Lord Hattersley, who as shadow home secretary drew up Labour's plans for the 1992 manifesto, argued this week in favour of a powerful second chamber that would revise legislation and safeguard individual rights. It would be elected in fixed terms. Much of it the Government will go along with but not the description of the new chamber *as a "Senate". The idea of a* powerful US-style Senate was dismissed as "fantasy" in Government circles yesterday. Nor was there much sympathy for using the second chamber as a quasi-federal body.

The Liberal Democrats would like a "Big Bang" approach. Robert Maclennan, its constitutional-affairs spokesman, favours a powerful second chamber which would scrutinise treaties and public appointments.

Labour will not go that far. But it is certainly hell-bent on reforming the Lords. It is time to legitimise the upper chamber for the first time in its history. And to do this by the *early part of the next century,* if not before.

Graphic sources: Hansard (figures correct as at November 4 1997); The House of Lords at Work; Labour age figures from Lord Graham of Edmonton, 1995 Labour briefing; job backgrounds from unpublished PhD thesis by Nicholas DJ Baldwin, University of Exeter; "school tie" figures calculated from entries in Dod's Parliamentary Companion (1997).
Graphic: Steve Villiers.
Research: Mark Espiner; Laura Peek.

Ewen MacAskill is the Guardian's chief political correspondent.

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Millions shun tax deadline

Revenue faces flood of forms

Rupert Jones

ABOUT 3.4 million people still have not returned their self-assessment tax forms, with only 23 days to go until fines are applicable, it was revealed yesterday.

A tax workers' trade union predicted the Inland Revenue would struggle to get anywhere near the full number back by the January 31 deadline. It estimates that about 700,000 of the 3.4 million are unrepresented by accountantsn, many of them having put off filling in the form.

"It's the 'behind the mantelpiece clock' syndrome," said Jim McAuslan, deputy general secretary of the Public Services, Tax and Commerce union (PTC).

Failure to meet the deadline will mean an immediate £100 fine. If 700,000 people do not file in time, this would yield a £70 million haul for the Treasury's coffers.

Nine million of the new-style forms have been sent out since April 1997, and the figure of 3.4 million outstanding is double the number suggested by a survey a month ago.

In addition to the initial fine, there are surcharges for late payment of tax — 5 per cent on tax unpaid by February 28, increasing to 10 per cent on July 31 — and interest will be charged on all late payments.

Launching its "January countdown campaign" yesterday, the Revenue insisted it was not heading for disaster and said the new system was going well. It is pinning its hopes on a last-minute surge. But the PTC said the idea that 3.4 million forms were going to arrive within the space of three weeks was "just not sustainable".

Despite millions of pounds being spent on advertising, the number of completed forms returned had slowed to a trickle in recent months, with some tax offices receiving only two or three a day, Mr McAuslan said.

"There was a big rush towards the end of September but as time has gone on it has really tailed off and there are very few returns coming in."

Most of the outstanding forms were issued to self-employed people, the majority of whom have accountants acting for them. According to the Revenue, accountants have consistently made clear that they are planning to file their forms at the last minute. It has been suggested this is because they think this will reduce the chances of their clients facing a tax inquiry.

Doug Smith, director of the self-assessment programme, conceded there were "a lot" of tax returns still to be sent back. But, he stressed, there would be no extension of the deadline.

"We are taking this very seriously and we are expecting tax agents and taxpayers to take it equally seriously."

Defending the new system, the biggest change to tax-paying for decades, Mr Smith said the scare stories and "prophecies of doom" which had emerged over the past two years had proved to be false.

If someone refuses to pay a fine levied on them, interest will be added to the penalty and the Revenue will pursue the debt in the normal way.

Tomorrow sees the start of an extensive advertising campaign designed to hammer home the message that "January 31 means January 31".

In an unprecedented move, most of the country's tax inquiry centres will open on January 31, a Saturday. The precise deadline is midnight.

Majestic fizz brings £65m takeover bid

Ian King

MAJESTIC, Britain's biggest wine warehouse chain, is understood to have received a takeover bid believed to value it at up to £65 million.

According to company insiders, the fast-expanding group, which is due to issue a Christmas trading statement today, could reach an agreement with its would-be buyer within three months.

Shares in Majestic, which claims to be the country's biggest retailer of champagne, have rocketed over the past two months as booming wine demand has increased sales and takeover rumours have circulated in the City.

However, the company said last night it was not holding formal talks with any suitor, claiming it was some way from completing an ambitious expansion programme. A spokesman said: "Everyone gets approached from time to time, it's part of corporate life, but there are no serious offers on the table."

Apart from the supermarket chains, possible buyers could include Whitbread and Allied Domecq.

Whitbread, which owns the Thresher, Wine Rack and Bottoms Up off-licences, recently opened a Booze Barn at Staples Corner, north London, which, if successful, could be expanded to compete with Majestic.

Similarly, Allied Domecq, which owns the Victoria Wine off-licence chain and its up-market sister operation Wine Cellars, opened Martha's Vineyard, its first wine warehouse, last year.

But Bass, which has an estimated war chest of around £2.5 billion following recent disposals, is not thought to be interested.

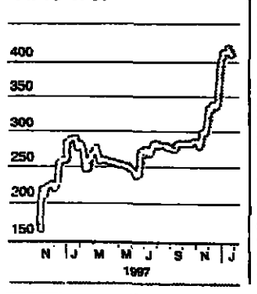
A deal valuing Majestic at around £65 million would mean a second fortune for Majestic's chairman, John Apthorp, who made an estimated £70 million when his Bejam frozen food chain was taken over by Iceland in 1989 in what was one of the bloodiest takeover battles of recent years.

Together with his family, Mr Apthorp, who floated Majestic on the Alternative Investment Market in November 1996, controls an estimated 70 per cent stake in Majestic, which would be valued at around £45.5 million.

Since its flotation, when it was valued at a mere £20.4 million, Majestic has been one of the most successful stocks quoted on the AIM.

● Guinness plans to build a £350 million business park next to its brewery in Park Royal, west London, which could create up to 5,000 jobs under a joint scheme with London and Regional Properties.

Majestic
Share price (p)





Falling victim . . . anguish greets the record drop in Hong Kong's Hang Seng index PHOTOGRAPH: PETER PARKS

Service sector inflation dents rate hopes

Mark Atkinson
Economics Correspondent

SIGNS of a pick-up in inflation in the UK's booming service sector, which accounts for two thirds of the economy, yesterday dented hopes that interest rates may have peaked.

The Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply's (Cips) monthly service sector survey — which showed that strong demand is allowing firms to raise prices — came too late to alter the City's perception that the Bank of England's monetary policy committee (MPC) will leave interest rates steady. The MPC will today announce the outcome of its first meeting of 1998.

Analysts say the run of data since the last meeting in December has been too mixed to prompt an increase from 7.25 per cent.

But the Cips survey came as a reminder that the next move could still be up unless decisive evidence of a slowdown in growth emerges soon.

David Coleman, of the Canadian bank CIBC, said: "Although UK financial markets are abuzz with expectations of a slowdown in economic activity, there is little sign of it in this survey."

He added: "Even if, as we expect, rates are not moved this week, the risk of tighter policy is still very real."

The survey, which covers a wide range of services, including hotels and restaurants, transport and communication and finance, registered only a small increase in the overall pace of expansion in December.

The business activity index rose to 57.6 from 57.5 in November. A reading above 50 indicates growth; below indicates contraction.

But the flow of new business accelerated sharply and alarm bells were set ringing by a surge the prices index which rose to a seven-month high of 53.1 from 50.

The CIPS said this reflected firms passing on the costs of higher wages, forced up by skills shortages, to their customers.

Ian Stewart, UK economist at the US investment bank Merrill Lynch, said: "This plays directly on the fears of the Bank that wages are forcing up inflation pressures."

Michael Saunders, of Salomon Smith Barney, said the outcome of next month's MPC meeting would hinge on key quarterly figures which will be available later this month.

These include the first estimate of gross domestic product in the fourth quarter of last year and business surveys from the Confederation of British Industry and the British Chambers of Commerce.

Hong Kong and Singapore join list of region's economic casualties

Asia in turmoil

John Aglionby in Jakarta

THE economic contagion blighting most of Southeast Asia claimed two other victims yesterday, as markets in the comparatively healthy economies of Hong Kong and Singapore fell sharply.

Both countries have already suffered from the "Asian flu," which began with the depreciation of the Thai baht in July and spread to currencies and stock markets throughout the region, though falls in Hong Kong and Singapore have been much less serious.

But yesterday Hong Kong's Hang Seng stock market index tumbled by nearly 6 per cent, falling through the psychological 10,000 level to 9,538.61.

Singapore's benchmark Straits Times Industrials Index fell almost 5 per cent and the island state's currency fell to a six-year low of 1.7850 against the US dollar. The Hong Kong dollar, formally linked to the US dollar, was little changed ending at 7.7480.

"I am not surprised that Hong Kong, and particularly Singapore, have been hit at last," said an analyst at ING Barings in Jakarta. "It's been a real mêlée out there and it was unlikely that they would remain unscathed forever."

However, few dealers see Hong Kong and Singapore meeting the same fate as their beleaguered neighbours — Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Turmoil in the latter countries resulted from overvalued currencies, high current account deficits and relatively low levels of foreign exchange reserves.

Hong Kong and Singapore, on the other hand, boast current account surpluses and large levels of reserves. "Their fundamentals are much stronger than their neighbours," said the ING Barings analyst, though warning that "the crisis has almost developed a life of its own so there are few guarantees anywhere."

In fact, the Asian flu has stretched all the way to Australia in recent days and the Australian dollar slumped to an 11-year low of 63.35 US cents earlier this week. Australia sends 60 per cent of its exports to Asian nations. ● *Martin Walker writes:* Europe has been and will remain protected from the Asian financial crisis by "a shield" of market confidence in the strength of EU economies striving to meet the criteria for the new single currency, EU finance commissioner Yves-Thibault de Silguy said yesterday.

The first full debate among EU commissioners on the Asian crisis was dominated by Mr de Silguy's ebullient report, which stressed that five months of turmoil in the Far East had coincided with growth in Europe, low inflation and falling interest rates. "The euro already acts as a shield for Europe, even before the single currency is launched," he said.

Call for swift solution to Eurobank job

Martin Walker in Brussels

THE dispute over the first governor of the new European Central Bank should be settled by a "swift and pragmatic" solution which recognised two distinct terms for the bank's role over the next eight years, the European Union's finance commissioner Yves-Thibault de Silguy suggested yesterday.

Mr de Silguy set out to float, without actually endorsing, a compromise under which Holland's Wim Duisenberg would run the bank for its first four years of life, until the euro currency is fully launched in January 2002. Mr Duisenberg could then be succeeded by Mr de Silguy's countryman, Jean-Claude Trichet of the Banque de France.

"We want this settled very quickly, in accordance with the Treaty. That means abiding by the three principles of the bank's independence, of the need for a credible and competent professional at the helm, and appointed by consensus with full political support", the EU's top financial official said.

But the sub-text of the hints and "personal ideas" that Mr de Silguy expressed at a press conference after yesterday's EU Commission meeting was that the Commission would not insist on a full eight-year term for the head of the new central bank if a deal could be reached to split the term between Mr Duisenberg and Mr Trichet.

Mr Duisenberg, the respected Dutch central banker, found himself ambushed last autumn by a sudden French demand that Mr Trichet get the job, in return for the new ECB being based in Germany.

Notebook

The fix that could beat the repo man



Edited by Mark Milner

TODAY both the Bank of England and the German Bundesbank will decide what to do about interest rates. Currently their respective repo rates (the old bank base rate in the UK) are poles apart — 3.3 per cent in Germany, 7.25 per cent in Britain.

The disparity is not hard to explain. The British economy has been expanding strongly, though growth is expected to slow this year. Germany, however, is struggling to get its economy moving forward. Unemployment is still trending upwards, its consumers reluctant to spend freely. Though investment shows signs of picking up, the only real drive is coming from the export sector.

But while short rates in the two countries differ by almost 4 percentage points, long term rates are much closer together — yields on benchmark 10-year government bonds are 1 point apart, down from 1.5 points in the summer. Indeed short rates in the UK are now significantly above 10-year levels.

A number of factors are affecting the shape of the yield curve in the UK. The most important is the credibility of the independent Bank of England's fight against inflation. Indeed there is now a worry that it may prove to be unnecessarily hawkish.

The relatively more conciliatory tone adopted by the Labour Government towards Europe, expected to be sustained and even highlighted during Britain's EU presidency, and the state of Britain's public finances are also seen as contributing to the closer convergence between long term rates in the UK and Germany.

For German policy makers the decision today looks pretty straightforward. It is hard to see any argument for raising rates with the economy in its current situation.

In Britain there are still those who believe the Bank's monetary policy committee might want just one more turn of the anti-inflation screw via one more quarter-point rise in rates, though it is hard to find anyone who expects it to come today.

Even from the point of its anti-inflation strategy the Bank might wonder if it is over-egging the pudding. The lower long rates fall, the more cheaply banks and building societies can borrow money to lend to house buyers in the form of fixed rate mortgages carrying interest rates below those prevailing on variable rate mortgages. The more attractive fixed rate borrowing becomes, the more people will switch to it.

Taken to its logical extreme that would make more and more home buyers less and less vulnerable to changes in variable mortgages rates. That, in turn, would undermine the effectiveness of the Bank's use of the interest rate weapon in the battle against inflation. *Just a thought.*

Master stroke

IT HAS taken the new masters of Lloyd's of London very little time to demonstrate their muscle. Only a few days back figures issued by the insurance market showed that corporate investors were about to eclipse the unlimited liability individuals who have underwritten Lloyd's through thick and thin for more than three centuries.

The *authorities at Lloyd's* could not wait to push aside bolshy individuals — in particular those who had gone to court to challenge their share of the market's £10 billion of losses — in favour of corporate investors.

But now, as new chairman *Max Taylor settles in, the* price of that professional support is being called. Corporate capital backers are demanding "urgent reforms" so that the ruling council of Lloyd's reflects their supremacy. They also want an unfettered free market system of *buying and selling shares of* syndicate allowances and they have given notice that the previously rather cavalier approach to spending adopted by Lloyd's syndicates will have to change.

One of the *fundamental* problems to beset Lloyd's in recent years *is the fact that it* has lost the substantial cost advantage its underwriters used to enjoy over peers in the corporate sector. True to form, the corporate voice is already calling for "outside consultants" to look at ways of cutting costs.

Lloyd's traditional way of doing business has conspicuously failed — there is no excuse for wiping out the market's entire capital in just three years of losses. But corporate investment with its consultants and cost cutting and orthodoxies will have to be careful to provide fresh standards at which the market should aim rather than simply acting as a dead hand on a business which has prided itself on individuality and entrepreneurship.

Bank's bargain

EVERY cloud is supposed to have a silver lining. Round at Commerzbank, they have reason to believe it. Yesterday the bank paid some $6 billion (£3.7 billion) for seats on the Tokyo and Osaka stock exchanges.

Last year a seat on the Tokyo exchange cost around $7 billion, so Commerzbank is effectively getting two for the price of one plus change.

The German bank still needs the blessing of Japan's financial market regulators, but given Japan's problems they are hardly likely to show the door to a European blue chip like Commerzbank.

Whether this is quite the best time to be investing the in Japanese equity market may prove another matter. But then they say that fortune favours the brave.

Lloyd's newcomers stir pot with call for modernisation

Lisa Buckingham
City Editor

THE first big confrontation between the new breed of investor in the Lloyd's insurance market and its traditional well-heeled backers erupted yesterday when the newcomers *demanded a range of* market modernisations.

The showdown comes just days after Lloyd's released figures showing that corporate capital investors would overtake private individuals as the largest providers of underwriting funds this year.

It has reignited the antipathy between the wealthy people who have backed the market throughout its 300-year history and the professionals who obtained access four years ago when it was on its financial knees after clocking up £10 billion losses.

The Lloyd's Corporate Capital Association yesterday demanded an overhaul of the market's ruling council so that all seven external posts are open to professionals, rather than five for individual investors or "names".

On the day that Max Taylor took up his position as chairman of the market, Lloyd's was also asked to open up the market to allow syndicate investments to be traded freely.

Although Mr Taylor has promised widespread reforms, the corporate capital lobby — led by heavyweights such as Jonathan Agnew, once tipped as market chairman, Mark Brockbank and Michael Wade — is also calling for Lloyd's to take a scythe to its cost base.

A low-cost base used to be one of the competitive strengths of the Lloyd's underwriting room compared with rivals in the company sector.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.48	France 9.858	Italy 2.862	Singapore 2.85
Austria 20.34	Germany 2.8888	Malta 0.63	South Africa 7.82
Belgium 59.64	Greece 459.48	Netherlands 3.2463	Spain 243.63
Canada 2.27	Hong Kong 12.23	New Zealand 2.80	Sweden 12.98
Cyprus 0.8494	India 64.42	Norway 11.88	Switzerland 2.33
Denmark 11.08	Ireland 1.1505	Portugal 294.62	Turkey 328,900
Finland 8.84	Israel 5.80	Saudi Arabia 5.99	USA 1.5880

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

هكذا من الأصل

Prancing horse unveiled



Red nose day . . . Eddie Irvine, left, and Michael Schumacher, right, uncover the sharp end of Ferrari's 1998 ambitions at Maranello VINCENZO PINTO

Todt stakes all on new Ferrari

Alan Henry on the F300 and the conviction from Maranello that 'only victory will do'

FERRARI's sporting director Jean Todt yesterday put his career on the line by saying that only victory in this year's world drivers' championship would be acceptable to the Italian team. They have not won it since Jody Scheckter in 1979.

Todt, the driving force behind Ferrari's steady Formula One revival since 1993, was speaking at the company's Maranello headquarters where the F300, to be driven by Michael Schumacher and Eddie Irvine, was unveiled.

"This year we have no excuses," said the Frenchman, who previously masterminded Peugeot's Le Mans-winning sportscar programme. "This is a very important day for the Ferrari racing department because it represents our hopes for 1998 with a new car and a new wind tunnel. The F300 incorporates all the expertise we have built up over the last few years."

The car has been developed entirely in Italy by two British engineers, Ross Brawn and Rory Byrne, who both worked with Schumacher at Benetton from 1991 to 1995. In addition to conforming to the 1998 technical regulations, which call for a narrower chassis and grooved tyres, the F300 incorporates major changes designed to remedy the problems which bedevilled last year's car.

The all-new V10 engine has the angle between cylinder banks widened from 75 to 80 degrees, which lowers the car's centre of gravity and thus improves its handling. Brawn said the car also has new brakes, a new electronic engine-management control unit and better protection for the drivers. He predicted the new regulations would make cars about three seconds a lap slower on most circuits.

Luca di Montezemolo, the Ferrari chairman, called for more objectivity from the media but avoided mentioning the controversial collision which ended Schumacher's and Ferrari's 1997 chances in the final race. "Last year we were beaten by the best car in the world . . . five to seven drivers currently competing in F1 could have won the world title at the wheel of that Williams," he said, a denigration of Schumacher's intended victim Jacques Villeneuve. "We can rely on the best world driver [Schumacher]."

He dismissed as "ridiculous" reports that a German prosecutor was considering legal action against Schumacher after a complaint from a German citizen about the Jerez collision. In fact the reports were accurate but yesterday the prosecuting official said there was no case to answer and the case was closed.

Schumacher, who was stripped by the International Automobile Federation of his runner-up position in the drivers' championship, will give the new car a trial at the team's Florano test track tomorrow. It will then be taken to Jerez for three days' testing next week, followed by runs at Barcelona and Mugello before the Australian Grand Prix opens the season on March 8.

What the experts think

Well it certainly has got to be this year, I suspect. If Jean Todt doesn't pull it off, then I suspect he will leave, possibly of his own accord. But in truth I imagine this will be another season like 1997, with Ferrari running strongly, gaining points regularly and in there with a chance. But I don't see them running away with the title. I suppose one of Ferrari's real problems is that they have put all their eggs in the Schumacher basket, with a No. 2 contracted to play second fiddle. I would think their car would be good but not dominantly outstanding.

John Barnard, Arrows Grand Prix technical director

The chemistry between Schumacher and Ross Brawn works not only in terms of race strategy but also car set-up. They are brilliant together but I think Williams are technically the best team. Ferrari will be very competitive and Michael is always capable of producing remarkable performances, like he did in the wet at Monaco.

Jackie Stewart, team owner

Last year's Ferrari had a few aerodynamic problems and I would think Rory [Byrne] is capable of getting on top of those and improving things. Ross and Rory also get on and work very well together. But will they actually make a big enough difference?

Gary Anderson, Jordan technical director

Ferrari will obviously improve again, but I don't see them able to cope with Williams and McLaren. I think it is also important to bear in mind that McLaren have made a late switch from Goodyear to Bridgestone tyres, which might give them an additional edge. Ferrari will be staying with Goodyear, so the relative tyre performance could be crucial.

Ken Tyrrell, former team owner

Racing

Swan will hold Court with plum ride in Ladbroke

Ron Cox

CHARLIE SWAN will ride Commanche Court in The Ladbroke at Leopardstown on Saturday. Ted Walsh, trainer of the big-race favourite, ended his search for a top-flight rider when he booked the reigning Irish champion jockey yesterday.

The mount on Commanche Court became available when regular rider Norman Williamson collected a riding ban. Walsh's son Ruby is also serving a suspension.

The trainer then turned to Richard Dunwoody and Tony McCoy but both are committed to ride at Sandown this weekend, provided the meeting goes ahead.

Having then provisionally booked leading claimer Garrett Cotter, Walsh snapped up Swan after trainer Aidan O'Brien agreed to release the champion from the ride on Toast The Spreece.

Swan, who has never ridden a winner of the Leopardstown race and chose another mount when Atone won in 1994, said: "I was meant to ride Toast The Spreece but the testing ground will be against him. He still runs but I am very grateful to the owners and Aidan for letting me off.

"I've ridden a few winners for Ted Walsh, but I've never ridden Commanche Court. He has an outstanding chance, will go on the ground and is in good form."

Commanche Court remains a solid 4-1 favourite with Ladbrokes, but Graphic Equaliser was popular yesterday and is now 6-1 from 8's. Fishin Joella, a well-backed outsider at the start of the week, is doubtful after injuring a leg.

Officials at Leopardstown were yesterday "very optimistic" that racing will go ahead on Saturday. Tom Burke, racing manager at the track, said: "The going is heavy but we are OK at the moment."

If Sandown survives, Saturday's Mildmay, Cazalet Chase, over an extended three miles and five furlongs, will test the stoutest of stayers.

Hill's make Oliver Sherwood's progressive eight-year-old Him Of Praise the 7-2 favourite, with Welsh National runner-up Dom Samourai next in at 4-1. Other leading prices are: 7-1 Hermes Harvest, 8-1 Harwell Lad, 9-1 What A Hand and 10-1 ANC Express, Full Of Oats and Yorkshire Gale.

A couple of gambles were landed at yesterday's meetings, with firstly Monchania justifying support from 25-1 down to 5-1 in the opening race at Wolverhampton, and then Stakis Casinos Boy landing some sizeable wagers in the seller at Musselburgh.

A mystery punter lumped on Stakis Casinos Boy with a bet of £20,000 at 7-4 and had few anxious moments as the four-year-old trotted up by seven lengths.

Stakis Casinos Boy is owned by the Brighton-based Ashley Carr Racing, a private racing service. But Carr insisted: "I didn't back the horse and I'm trying to find out who did.

"He certainly won't be running in any more sellers and you might see him in the Triumph Hurdle at Cheltenham," said winning trainer Brian Ellison.

Norman Williamson enjoyed a rare visit to the Scottish track with a 23-1 treble aboard Fern Leader, Sprung Rhythm and Sikander A Azam.

Sellers are usually best avoided for betting purposes, but clearly not at Musselburgh yesterday and it is difficult to get away from the claims of Impala (1.50) in the lowest grade at Catterick this afternoon.

Winner of a mile claimer on soft ground at Epsom last year, Impala dropped into selling company for the first time over hurdles at Bangor last month and looked an unlucky loser.

Beaten half a length by Zabaalie, he would almost certainly have held on but for a mistake two out and against a line-up of mainly exposed platers Bill Turner's gelding looks well worth another chance off a light weight here.

Turner also sends Rusty Reel (12.50) on the long haul from Somerset. Hampered by a slipping saddle when a clear second to Lord Rullah at Carlisle last time, Rusty Reel may handle the soft ground better than probable favourite Fatehalkhair.

Supremism (2.50) was no great shakes on the Flat when trained by Clive Brittain, but has a future over hurdles judging by his promising fifth behind Virtuoso at Warwick.

Now with Di Haine, who was on the mark with the well-backed Classic Eagle at Catterick just over a week ago, Supremism should go close in the Halifax Novice Hurdle.

At Lingfield, Treble Term (3.00) catches the eye. Peter Makin's filly has shown ability on all her three starts and makes her handicap debut off a modest mark.

Sandown the bright spot as wet weather causes cancellations

WET WEATHER continues to take its toll on jump racing, but prospects for Sandown Park on Saturday, where the Tolworth Hurdle and the Anthony Mildmay, Peter Cazalet Memorial Handicap Chase are the main events, have improved, *writes Ron Cox.*

Andrew Cooper, clerk of the course at Sandown, said: "The course is much better. There are one or two parts that are saturated, but the overall prospects are encouraging.

"The track is as good as it has been all week and the forecast is for mainly dry weather. We could take the odd shower but not the third to half an inch of rain we've been getting lately."

Reports from Saturday's other turf meetings, at Warwick and Haydock, are not so good. There will be inspections at both courses this afternoon and Haydock, in particular, looks doubtful.

Haydock's clerk of the course Philip Arkwright explained: "We've had a wet morning and the forecast is bad for tonight and tomorrow. I'd have to say that it is not encouraging."

Today's scheduled meeting at Market Rasen was called off yesterday morning, and tomorrow's card at Exeter followed suit after a 2.00pm inspection.

Towcester tomorrow is also in doubt. Stewards will inspect the course at 8.30am this morning.

Mild weather over Christmas helped total prize-money exceed £60 million for the first time last year.

Jump purses were boosted by a fall in fixture cancellations which contributed to an overall 1997 total of £60.22 million, a 2.5 per cent increase on 1996.

A 13.9 per cent rise in racecourse contributions and an extra 8.3 per cent in sponsorship helped offset a cut in the Levy Board's contribution of more than £800,000.

Catterick programme plus form guide

	RON COX	TOP FORM
12.50	Rusty Reel	Fatehalkhair
1.20	Feels Like Gold	Feels Like Gold
1.50	Impala (nap)	Impala
2.20	Ham N'Eggs	Dragons Bay (nb)
2.50	Supremism (nb)	Jessica One
3.20	Sirerie	Winter Belle
3.50	Queensway	—

Oval, left-handed 1¼m track with 240yds run-in and sharp turns.
Going: Soft ★ Denotes blinkers. ● Top form rated.
Long distance travellers: Impala (1.50) & Rusty Reel (12.50), W Turner, Somerset, 280 miles.
Seven day winners: 1.20 Prime Example.
Blinkered first time: 1.50 Hya Prim. **Visored:** None.

12.50 LEEDS HANDICAP HURDLE 2m 3f £2,248 (8 declared)

1 20/602 Rusty Reel (8) W G M Turner 8-12-0 .... A Thornton 89
2 613-36 Brambles Way (65) (BF) Mrs M Reveley 9-11-10 .... P Niven 87
3 21134F Fatehalkhair (13) (BF) B Ellison 6-11-8 .... C McCormack (5) ●90
4 3141-4 Nattelewala (9) L Lungo 10-11-7 .... W Dowling (7) 88
5 /46R-4 Gymcrak Tiger (153) (B) G Holmes 8-10-6 .... L Wyer ★ 85
6 3P/03P Whatdidyousay (13) B Bousfield 10-10-0 .... B Storey 82
7 603-24 Perpetual Light (22) (BF) J J Quinn 5-10-0 .... R McGrath (3) 88
8 331/3- Vibrano (580) (BF) D Moffatt 7-10-0 .... R Studholme (7) —

Betting: 2-1 Fatehalkhair, 7-2 Rusty Reel, 11-2 Nattelewala, 6-1 Perpetual Light, 8-1 Brambles Way, 10-1 Whatdidyousay, 12-1 Gymcrak Tiger, Vibrano.

FORM GUIDE - Rusty Reel: Challenged 2 out, hung badly left, not quicken flat, 10l 2nd of 6 behind Lord Rullah at Carlisle 2m4f hcap hdl, Sft. Fatehalkhair: Made most until left at the last in race won by Orange at Sedgefield 2m1f hcap hdl, Sft. Nattelewala: Held up, lost touch 6th, steady late headway, 28l 4th of 5 behind Once More For Luck at Carlisle 2m1f hcap hdl, Hvy. Gymcrak Tiger: Headway and prominent 4th, ridden 3 out, one pace, 5l 4th of 11 behind Ile Mon at Market Rasen 3m1f hcap hdl, Gd-Fm. Whatdidyousay: Led until 3rd, chased leaders until weakened 6th, pulled up 3 out in race won by Justin Mac at Wetherby 3m nov hdl, Sft. Perpetual Light: Always chasing leaders, ridden 3 out, no impression, 15l 4th of 10 behind Point Duty at Catterick 3m nov hcap hdle, Gd.

1.20 WAKEFIELD NOVICE CHASE 3m 1f 110yds £2,941 (14 declared)

1 64-211 Prime Example (7) (CD) M Todhunter 7-11-12 .... R Dunwoody 90
2 0 All The Gas (21) Mrs A Naughton 7-11-5 .... Mr T J Barry (7) —
3 6-UP6 Apache Raider (8) F Murphy 6-11-5 .... E Callaghan 78
4 F/0/3/2 Catterney (13) D Lamb 8-11-5 .... J Burke 84
5 3P3-0F Court Joker (13) H Alexander 8-11-5 .... R McGrath (3) —
6 3032R David's Way (13) M Pell 9-11-5 .... D Bentley ★ —
7 0/7333 Feels Like Gold (12) D Richards 10-11-5 .... A Dobbin ●90
8 F4-3P5 Flat Top (8) M W Easterby 7-11-5 .... P Niven 88
9 P413-4 Harfdecent (48) Mrs M Reveley 7-11-5 .... M H Naughton (5) —
10 5-PP00 Just For Me (7) J A Moore 9-11-5 .... R Garritty —
11 10/4-4 Lord Fortune (53) M Hammond 8-11-5 .... J Supple 83
12 C/P0/4 Sillars Stalker (13) (B) Mrs A Swinbank 10-11-5 .... B Harding —
13 U0/23 Torus Spa (27) F Murphy 7-11-5 .... C McCormack (5) —
14 P0 4 Springlea Tower (7) R Nixon 5-10-7 .... —

Betting: 7-4 Feels Like Gold, 5-2 Prime Example, 9-2 Harfdecent, 8-1 Flat Top, 10-1 Catterney, Lord Fortune, 16-1 Court Joker, 20-1 Torus Spa.

FORM GUIDE - Prime Example: Jumped well, made all, clear from 3 out, eased flat, won by 7l from Allerbank, with Springlea Tower (rec 12lb) another 25l away 4th, at Catterick 3m1f nov ch, Sft. Apache Raider: Mistakes, behind, headway 10th, never dangerous, 37l 6th of 12 behind Celestial Choir at Carlisle 2m 4f nov ch, Sft. Catterney: Mistakes, always in touch, chased leaders from 2 out, 3l 2nd of 13 behind Chipped Out, with Sillars Stalker (levels) 3rd and weakening when blundered 3 out, further 24l back in 4th, at Sedgefield 2m5f nov ch, Sft. Feels Like Gold: Led until headed after 2 out, kept on, 10l 3rd of 7 behind Stare Options at Wetherby 3m1f nov ch, Sft. Flat Top: Chased leader, till 5th, weakened from 4 out, 30l 5th of 7 behind Inglesdon at Carlisle 2m hcap ch, Sft.

1.50 BRADFORD SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE 2m £1,996 (12 declared)

1 3/4113 Nator (8) (B) S Clark 9-11-13 .... Miss R Clark (5) 89
2 -7-225 Scarabeus (21) (CD) F Storey 10-11-9 .... B Storey 88
3 -5540F Kierchem (8) (CD) C Grant 7-10-9 .... C McCormack (5) 85
4 55PS3- Dramdonis (628) P Beaumont 8-10-1 .... R Supple —
5 50/ Impala (22) W G M Turner 4-10-0 .... J Power (7) ●90
6 40P0-R Casarabellparted (31) M Pell 7-10-0 .... D Bentley 78

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

7 F0-002 One Stop (8) M Barnes 5-10-0 .... S Taylor (5) 87
8 000P Sagebrush Roller (13) J J O'Neill 10-10-0 .... R Dunwoody 86
9 3FP Another Please (13) A J Lockwood 5-10-0 .... S Ryan (5) —
10 000F0F Hya Prim (23) N Chamberlain 7-10-0 .... W Dwan ★ —
11 0PP-0 Polar Wind (63) M Waggott 9-10-0 .... M Foster —
12 PU-PP4 Regal Jest (13) B Murray 8-10-0 .... R Studholme (7) —

Betting: 5-2 Impala, 7-2 Nator, 4-1 Scarabeus, 9-2 One Stop, 8-1 Kierchem, 12-1 Dramdonis, Sagebrush Roller.

FORM GUIDE - Scarabeus: Behind, effort 4th, no impression, 23l 5th of 7 behind Fen Terrier at Catterick 2m hcap hdl, Gd. Dramdonis: Always prominent, kept on one pace, 14l 3rd of 11 behind Eights Sharp at Perth 2m sell hdl, Sft. Impala: Tracked leaders, mistake 2 out, led approaching last to flat, ran on, 3l 2nd of 13 behind Zabaalie at Bangor 2m1f nov sell hdl, Gd. One Stop: Always chasing winner, hit 2 out, kept on flat, 4l 2nd behind Opera Fan, with Nator (gave 35lb) 6l away 3rd and Kierchem (gave 9lb) tailed off last of 6 finishers, at Catterick 2m sell hcap hdle, Sft. Sagebrush Roller: Held up and behind, ridden along approaching 4 out, tailed off when pulled up 3 out in race won by Focair at Ayr 2m sell hcap hdle, Hvy. Another Please: In rear, tailed off when pulled up 4 out in race won by Colour Code at Market Rasen 2m3f mdn hdl, Hvy.

2.20 BARNSLEY NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE 2m £2,921 (7 declared)

1 426-41 Ham N'Eggs (13) (B) M Hammond 7-12-0 .... R Garritty 89
2 00640- Fox Sparrow (P152) (CD) B Mactaggart 8-10-8 .... B Storey —
3 00604/ Out By Night (828) G M Moore 7-10-7 .... N Bentley —
4 454-P3 Moss Pageant (8) F Walton 8-10-7 .... T Reed 87
5 43-FPP Dantes Amour (8) E Alston 7-10-0 .... L Cummins (5) —
6 3PP-62 Dragons Bay (8) Mrs M Reveley 9-10-0 .... R Supple ●90
7 0PP-00 Ballyblessingel (36) M Bycroft 5-10-0 .... R Supple —

Betting: 7-4 Ham N'Eggs, 2-1 Dragons Bay, 7-2 Moss Pageant, 10-1 Out By Night, 12-1 Fox Sparrow, 20-1 Dantes Amour, 33-1 Ballyblessingel.

FORM GUIDE - Ham N'Eggs: Tracked leaders, led 4 out, stayed on well, eased flat, won by 19l from Jolly Heart at Wetherby 2m nov ch, Sft. Fox Sparrow: In touch to halfway, soon beaten, last of 7 behind Rachael's Owen at Perth 2m cond hcap hdl, Gd-Fm. Moss Pageant: Led until weakened and headed final 50y, 29l 3rd of 10 behind Arthur Bee at Catterick 2m mdn ch, Sft. Dragons Bay: Led 4 out, ridden and mistake when headed last, not quicken towards finish, neck 2nd of 8 behind Corbleu at Catterick 2m3f nov hcap chs, Sft.

2.50 HALIFAX NOVICE HURDLE 2m £2,318 (10 declared)

1 42-121 Jessica One (47) (B) Mrs M Reveley 7-11-7 .... P Niven ●90
2 534 Alpine Hideaway (13) M W Easterby 5-11-5 .... A Thornton 89
3 5 Archie-T (22) P Beaumont 5-11-5 .... R Supple —
4 0-0 Craigie Boy (13) N Bycroft 8-11-5 .... G Parkin —
5 032 Doctor Bravious (8) B Ellison 5-11-5 .... E Callaghan 87
6 P-P5 Ivyangobblee (13) H Alexander 6-11-5 .... Mr T J Barry (7) —
7 0 Rusk (13) T Easterby 5-11-5 .... L Wyer 78
8 0 Square Deal (19) S Bowring 7-11-5 .... T Dascombe —
9 Stallion Gold (F80) Mrs M Reveley 4-10-7 .... G Lee —
10 5 Supremism (24) Miss D Haine 4-10-7 .... J F Titley 89

Betting: 11-4 Jessica One, 3-1 Alpine Hideaway, 7-2 Supremism, 5-1 Doctor Bravious, 8-1 Rusk, 10-1 Ivyangobblee, 12-1 Stallion Gold.

FORM GUIDE - Jessica One: Headway halfway, led on bit 2 out, comfortably, won by 8l from Carol Again at Catterick 2m3f mde hdl, Gd. Alpine Hideaway: Held up and behind, one pace from 3 out, 33l 4th of 15 behind Justin Mac, with Ivyangobblee (levels) another 1l away 5th, Rusk (levels) 10th & Craigie Boy (levels) 11th, at Wetherby 2m nov hdl, Sft. Doctor Bravious: Steady headway approaching 2 out, stayed on well flat, 7l 3rd of 15 behind Rave at Catterick 2m mde hdl, Sft. Supremism: Behind, headway approaching 3 out, one pace from next, 18l 5th of 20 behind Virtuoso at Warwick 2m nov hdl, Gd-Sft.

3.20 ILKLEY HANDICAP CHASE 3m 1f 110yds £2,707 (5 declared)

1 20-264 Naughty Future (13) (B) (BF) J J O'Neill 9-11-13 .... R Dunwoody 89
2 U22-51 Winter Belle (8) (7lb ex) (CD) J Howard Johnson 10-11-10 .... A Dobbin ●90
3 234-32 Seeking Gold (13) (D) J Barclay 9-11-8 .... B Storey 89
4 046-65 Heavenly Citizen (8) (CD) J Gledson 10-11-6 .... C McCormack (5) 85
5 /03-31 Sirerie (13) S Bell 8-11-0 .... K Smith 88

Betting: 2-1 Sirerie, 5-2 Winter Belle, 7-2 Naughty Future, Seeking Gold, 12-1 Heavenly Citizen.

FORM GUIDE - Winter Belle: Joined leaders 10th, led 3 out, soon clear, won by 28l from Shoofk Lad at Catterick 3m1f hcap ch, Sft. Seeking Gold: Made most, headed approaching last, no extra, 3l 2nd of 7 behind Judicious Captain, with Naughty Future (gave 5lb) another 7l away 4th, at Ayr 3m1f hcap ch, Sft. Heavenly Citizen: Outpaced and behind from 9th, no danger, distant 5th behind Committed Schedule at Carlisle 3m2f hcap ch, Sft. Sirerie: Soon tracking leaders, led 7th, stayed on strongly from 2 out, won by 15l from Tudor Fellow at Sedgefield 3m3f hcap ch, Sft.

3.50 HUDDERSFIELD STANDARD NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE 2m £1,193 (10 declared)

1 1-2 Queensway (28) (B) (BF) J FitzGerald 6-11-11 .... F Leahy (5)
2 Advanced Steel R Woodhouse 5-11-4 .... E Callaghan
3 Birdes Boy C Grant 5-11-4 .... C McCormack (5)
4 0 Colmarane (13) Mrs S Smith 6-10-13 .... Mr J Saville (7)
5 Dark Sally N Chamberlain 5-10-13 .... B Harding
6 4 Kallan Scamp (45) J Parkes 5-10-13 .... S Ryan (5)
7 0-0 Swiftly Supreme (58) T Cuthbert 5-10-13 .... Mr T Davidson (7)
8 00 Woody Scud (22) J Pickering 5-10-13 .... O Burrows (5)
9 Nashimaolin M W Easterby 4-10-7 .... P Midgley (3)
10 Martha's Moonstone T Easterby 4-10-2 .... A Thornton

Betting: 4-6 Queensway, 6-1 Kallan Scamp, 7-1 Martha's Moonstone, 8-1 Nashimaolin, 12-1 Birdes Boy, Colmarane, 20-1 Advanced Steel, Dark Sally, Woody Scud, 25-1 Swiftly Supreme.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Jockeys	1st	Runs	%	Level St
P Niven	24	87	27.6	+16.72
R Garritty	16	91	17.6	-13.41
A S Smith	13	73	17.8	-1.54
A Dobbin	13	99	13.1	-27.55
B Storey	12	150	8	-67.05
J Callaghan	11	74	14.9	+14.87
T Reed	10	79	12.8	+2.75

Trainers	1st	Runs	%	Level St
Mrs M Reveley	18	86	20.9	-17.80
M Hammond	12	112	10.7	-51.31
Mrs S J Smith	10	76	13.2	-13.63
L Lungo	9	49	18.4	+21.00
G M Moore	9	74	12.2	-2.38
T D Easterby	8	22	36.4	+13.69
J G FitzGerald	8	44	18.2	-9.49

Lingfield all-weather Jackpot meeting

	RON COX	TOP FORM
12.30	Jubilee Scholar	Badrinath
1.00	Paint It Black	Rocky Waters
1.30	Gi La High	Palacegate Jack
2.00	Flight	Flight
2.30	Mr Speaker	Sweet Supposin
3.00	Treble Term	Just Another Time (nap)
3.30	Tarry	Ronquista d'Or

All-weather, Equitrack, left-handed course laid out inside turf track and only 1¼m round. No straight sprint track.
Going: Standard. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Draw: No advantage.
Long distance travellers: Palacegate Jack (1.30) & Just Another Time (3.00), J Berry, Lancs, 268 miles; Paint It Black (1.00), D Nicholls, N Yorks, 254 miles.
Seven day winners: 12.30 Badrinath & 3.30 Ronquista d'Or.
Blinkered first time: None. **Visored:** None.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. J.Jumps.

12.30 TALISMAN HANDICAP (DIV 1) 1m 2f £1,903 (9 declared)

101 (7) 44500- Royal Ceilidh (J19) D Williams 5-8-11 .... P P Murphy (3) —
102 (5) 00410- Palisander (37) (CD) S Dow 4-8-7 .... S Sanders 89
103 (1) 33350- Bon Guest (97) Miss B Sanders 4-9-5 .... A Clark 85
104 (2) 5450- Thoughtful Kate (98) B Palling 4-9-2 .... T Sprake 86
105 (8) 26152- Jubilee Scholar (28) (CD) (BF) G L Moore 5-8-11 .... F Norton ★ 88
106 (3) 60330- Zorro (37) (B) R Flower 4-8-7 .... Dane O'Neill 84
107 (4) 0023-1 Badrinath (7) (6lb ex) (CD) H Collingridge 4-8-7 .... J Quinn ●90
108 (6) 52000- Paronomasia (21) J L Harris 6-8-2 .... A McCarthy (7) 85
109 (9) 00000- Mislemani (28) A Newcombe 8-7-10 .... Martin Dwyer —

Betting: 9-4 Badrinath, 11-4 Jubilee Scholar, 4-1 Palisander, 8-1 Zorro, 10-1 Royal Ceilidh, Bon Guest, 12-1 Mislemani.

1.00 RED GAUNTLET SELLING STAKES 7f £1,956 (14 declared)

201 (9) 00400- Amie (J38) J Poulton 6-9-6 .... Martin Dwyer —
202 (8) 0000- Blue Calvine (181) W G M Turner 4-9-6 .... D McGaffin (7) —
203 (5) 05050- Bowens Glory (J28) Mrs L Stubbs 4-9-6 .... Dane O'Neill ★ 84
204 (13) 0050-0 Newell Storm (2) (CD) D French Davis 10-9-6 .... P P Murphy ★ 86
205 (7) 04306- Invocation (27) (CD) G L Moore 11-9-6 .... A Clark 87
206 (11) 50500- Lancashire Legend (37) (CD) S Dow 5-9-6 .... S Sanders —
207 (2) 60000- Lift Boy (20) (CD) G L Moore 9-9-6 .... Candy Morris 89
208 (4) 00003- Manikin (37) Mrs L Stubbs 4-9-6 .... S Whitworth ★ —
209 (12) 5500-6 Our Shadee (5) (C) (D) K Ivory 8-9-6 .... C Scally ★ 85
210 (3) 000-03 Paint It Black (2) (B) D Nicholls 5-9-6 .... A Nicholls (7) 88
211 (10) 24062- Rocky Waters (37) (C) (D) M Usher 9-9-6 .... P McCabe (3) ★ ●90
212 (1) 8000-0 Waders Dream (6) Pat Mitchell 9-9-6 .... Amanda Sanders —
213 (14) 06000- Iolo Gold (28) (CD) J Poulton 5-9-1 .... A McCarthy (7) ★ 83
214 (6) 05020- Tael Of Silver (44) (B) A Bailey 6-9-1 .... D Wright 81

Betting: 5-1 Paint It Black, 11-2 Tael Of Silver, 6-1 Invocation, 7-1 Lancashire Legend, Lift Boy, 8-1 Manikin, Our Shadee, Rocky Waters.

1.30 GUY MANNERING CLAIMING STAKES 5f £2,779 (6 declared)

301 (6) 04210- Palacegate Jack (21) (CD) J Berry 7-9-3 .... C Lowther (3) ★ ●90
302 (5) 01630- Ancizato (28) (CD) K Ivory 4-8-13 .... Martin Dwyer ★ 87
303 (1) 5631-3 Friendly Brave (6) (CD) (BF) Gay Kelleway 8-8-13 .... S Sanders ★ 88
304 (2) 3000-0 Plain Gaz (7) J Bridger 5-8-11 .... J Quinn 80
305 (3) 02043- Mister Raider (17) (CD) E Wheeler 6-8-7 .... A Daly (3) ★ 87
306 (4) 00006- Gi La High (28) (CD) M Meade 5-8-2 .... J Bramhill 89

Betting: 5-2 Mister Raider, 3-1 Palacegate Jack, 7-2 Friendly Brave, 4-1 Ancizato, 13-2 Gi La High, 16-1 Plain Gaz.

2.00 QUENTIN DURWARD MAIDEN STAKES 3YO 1m £3,518 (11 declared)

401 (2) 45232- Appyabo (27) M Quinn 9-0 .... A Whelan (3) 88
402 (9) Bin Fee Dr J Scargill 9-0 .... J Quinn —
403 (6) 0532- Flight (28) S Dow 9-0 .... W Ryan ●90
404 (11) 6560-0 Kanimon (5) R Ingram 9-0 .... A McGlone —
405 (10) 0- Roger Ross (58) R Flower 9-0 .... S Drowne —
406 (3) 000- Sammy's Shuffle (20) R Flower 9-0 .... Martin Dwyer —
407 (1) 6- Shira-a (89) M Polglase 9-0 .... M Fenton 88
408 (7) Tango R Hannon 9-0 .... Dane O'Neill —
409 (8) Secret Harmony V Soane 8-9 .... R Perham —
410 (5) Snow And Ice H Candy 8-9 .... N Adams —
411 (4) Winter Rivel G L Moore 8-9 .... A Clark —

Betting: 7-4 Flight, 7-2 Appyabo, 11-2 Tango, 8-1 Shira-A, Snow And Ice, Winter Rivel, 12-1 Secret Harmony.

2.30 TALISMAN HANDICAP (DIV 2) 1m 2f £1,893 (8 declared)

501 (6) 65524- Sweet Supposin (29) (CD) C Dwyer 7-9-10 .... S Sanders ★ ●90
502 (2) 35500- Princess Of Hearts (92) G L Moore 4-9-7 .... Candy Morris ★ 85
503 (8) 20006- Mr Speaker (J38) G Bravery 5-9-4 .... M Tebbutt 89
504 (3) 68033- Billaddie (20) (C) R Flower 5-9-0 .... Dane O'Neill 84
505 (7) /3004- Wing of A Prayer (J12) P Mitchell 4-8-8 .... A Clark 82
506 (4) 51604- Multi Franchise (17) (CD) R Flower 5-8-7 .... Martin Dwyer 88
507 (1) /0000- Four Of Spades (29) (C) K Burke 7-8-4 .... Amanda Sanders ★ —
508 (5) 35030- Ialowell (28) G L Moore 4-8-1 .... F Norton 82

Betting: 9-4 Sweet Supposin, 9-2 Princess Of Hearts, Billaddie, 11-2 Multi Franchise, 8-1 Mr Speaker, Wing Of A Prayer, Four Of Spades, Ialowell.

3.00 WAVERLEY HANDICAP 3YO 6f £3,388 (5 declared)

601 (4) 2611-2 Just Another Time (6) (CD) (BF) J Berry 9-7 .... C Lowther (3) ●90
602 (2) 30430- Sada (33) C Dwyer 9-7 .... S Sanders 89
603 (1) 02403- Flame Tower (79) R Hannon 9-4 .... P Dobbs (7) 84
604 (5) 008- Treble Term (33) P Makin 8-13 .... A Clark 87
605 (3) 6006-0 Legal Lark (7) (B) P Howling 8-11 .... J Quinn 83

Betting: 15-8 Just Another Time, 9-4 Sada, 3-1 Flame Tower, 6-1 Treble Term, 10-1 Legal Lark.

3.30 IVANHOE HANDICAP 1m 5f £2,285 (9 declared)

1 (5) /0000- Hal Hoo Yaroom (J54) J Jenkins 5-10-0 .... A Clark —
2 (4) 01262- Tarry (17) Gay Kelleway 5-9-12 .... S Sanders 88
3 (2) 53230- Coh Sho No (85) (BF) S Dow 5-9-4 .... Dane O'Neill 88
4 (8) 6208-1 Ronquista d'Or (6) (6lb ex) G Ham 4-9-1 .... S Drowne ★ ●90
5 (7) 00380- Temptress (27) J L Harris 5-8-13 .... J Quinn 87
6 (3) 0256-3 Blue Lamp (7) R Ingram 4-8-8 .... A McGlone 88
7 (6) 55000- Royal Circus (52) (CD) P Hiatt 9-8-1 .... A Daly (3) —
8 (6) 0000-3 Coastguards Hero (2) M Usher 5-7-12 .... J Marshall 85
9 (1) 60000- Executive Officer (17) R Flower 5-7-12 .... Martin Dwyer ★ 83

Betting: 2-1 Ronquista D'or, 3-1 Tarry, 5-1 Coh Sho No, 13-2 Tempress, 8-1 Blue Lamp, 10-1 Royal Circus, 16-1 Hal Hoo Yaroom, Coastguards Hero, 20-1 Executive Officer.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Jockeys	1st	Runs	%	Level St
J Weaver	75	330	22.7	+24.38
L Dettori	62	244	25.4	+9.57
A Clark	52	399	13	-31.59
R Cochrane	50	295	16.9	-32.00
S Sanders	46	417	11	-125.36
S Whitworth	36	222	16.2	-59.49
D Holland	34	149	22.8	+21.22

Trainers	1st	Runs	%	Level St
G L Moore	66	427	15.5	+1.51
Miss Gay Kelleway	28	162	17.3	-52.49
R Hannon	24	138	17.4	-7.58
R Ingram	24	170	14.1	+11.77
S Dow	23	252	9.13	-72.00
J Berry	19	97	19.6	+0.84
Miss B Sanders	13	97	13.4	-37.75

Trainer watch

The following are horses who are having their first run for a new trainer today —
Lingfield: 12.30 Thoughtful Kate, J Burns to B Palling; 1.00 Blue Calvine, C J Hill to W G M Turner; 2.00 Shira-a Ling, K Prendergast to M J Polglase; 2.30 Princess of Hearts, M C Pipe to G L Moore.
Catterick: 2.20 Fox Sparrow, N Tinkler to A B MacTaggart.

Results

WOLVERHAMPTON

1.00 (1m 100yds): 1, MONCHANIA, S Righton (5-1); **2, Run Or Bust** (5-1); **3, Honey Storm** (9-2). 4-1 Fav Qiamat. 13 ran. 11, ¾. (J Spearing) Tote: £4.80; £1.90, £1.40, £3.60. Dual F: £13.30. Trio: £80.30. CSF: £35.08.

1.30 (1m 100yds): 1, SAWHAN, T Williams (2-1); **2, Prince Ashleigh** (5-1); **3, Boulevard Rouge** (12-1). 11-10 Fav Primary Colours. 5 ran. 2, 2½. (J Eyre) Tote: £3.20; £1.10, £2.40. Dual F: £22.40. CSF: £11.66.

2.00 (1m 1f 79yds): 1, ANONYM, O Pears (7-4 Fav); **2, Bongo** (7-2); **3, Leah Style** (6-1). 8 ran. 3½, 5. (J Eyre) Tote: £2.70; £1.60, £1.40, £2.50. Dual F: £6.00. CSF: £8.03.

2.30 (5f): 1, IMP EXPRESS, Dale Gibson (10-1); **2, Aljaz** (9-2); **3, Hilltons Executive** (7-1). 12 ran. 1½, hd. (P Felgate) Tote: £12.70; £4.00, £1.80, £1.50. Dual F: £23.80. Trio: £85.70. CSF: £55.20. Tricast: £325.90. Non Runner: Silk Cottage.

3.00 (1m 4f): 1, SWAN HUNTER, G Milligan (11-4 Fav); **2, Mr Fortywinks** (3-1); **3, Alzaala** (3-1). 10 ran. 1, 8. (D Cosgrove) Tote: £3.80; £1.80, £1.10, £1.70. Dual F: £10.70. Trio: £8.30. CSF: £12.58. Tricast: £27.64.

3.30 (1m 1f 79yds): 1, ETHBAAT, A Clark (9-2); **2, Cee-N-K** (Evens Fav); **3, Soldier Cove** (6-1). 8 ran. 1½, ¾. (M Heaton-Ellis) Tote: £4.10; £1.10, £1.40, £1.80. Dual F: £4.20. CSF: £8.97.

4.00 (6f): 1, SEANCHAI, Mr J Crowley (33-1); **2, Ellie Hope** (15-8 Fav); **3, Young Bert** (20-1). 10 ran. Nk, 2. (P Felgate) Tote: £67.40; £7.70, £1.50, £3.60. Dual F: £162.00. CSF: £90.50. Trio: Not won. Tricast: £1,289.77.

4.30 (6f): 1, TIME TO FLY, Miss A Elsey (7-2); **2, Miller's Double** (4-1); **3, Little Ibnr** (10-1). Evens Fav Redoubtable. 9 ran. 3½, 5. (B Murray) Tote: £7.40; £1.20, £1.60, £2.50. Dual F: £8.10. Trio: £26.10. CSF: £19.60. Tricast: £127.45.

JACKPOT: Not won. Pool of £3,618.73 carried forward to Lingfield today.
QUADPOT: £4.20.
PLACEPOT: £28.00.

MUSSELBURGH

12.40 (2m): 1, GOSPEL SONG, B Harding (5-1); **2, Mentel** (13-8 Fav); **3, Badge of Fame** (11-4). 13 ran. ¾, hd. (A Whillans) Tote: £8.50; £1.10, £1.10, £2.80. Dual F: £5.10. Trio: £8.90. CSF: £11.57.

1.10 (2m): 1, STAKIS CASINOS BOY, E Callaghan (6-4 Fav); **2, Recruitment** (8-1); **3, Master Hyde** (9-4). 8 ran. 7, 1½. (B Ellison) Tote: £2.20; £1.30, £2.20, £1.60. Dual F: £10.00. CSF: £12.91.

1.40 (3m): 1, FERN LEADER, N Williamson (7-4 Fav); **2, Celtdown Boy** (5-1); **3, Up For Ransome** (5-1). 7 ran. ¾, 13. (C Grant) Tote: £1.60; £1.10, £4.50. Dual F: £6.60. CSF: £8.72. Tricast: £25.88. Non Runner: The Shy Padre.

2.10 (3m): 1, SPRUNG RHYTHM, N Williamson (6-5 Fav); **2, What's Your Story** (14-1); **3, Young Steven** (10-1). 6 ran. 9, 7. (K Bailey) Tote: £2.10; £1.00, £9.90. Dual F: £6.30. CSF: £13.55.

2.40 (2m 4f): 1, SALEM BEACH, M Moloney (7-2); **2, Hobbs Choice** (6-4 Fav); **3, Monkey Wench** (4-1). 6 ran. Nk, 1. (Martin Todhunter) Tote: £6.40; £1.80, £1.10. Dual F: £5.60. CSF: £7.45.

3.10 (2m): 1, ARCTIC SANDY, B Storey (16-1); **2, Singing Sand** (11-8 Jt Fav); **3, Moneyman** (11-8 Jt Fav). 4 ran. 12, 6. (J Oliver) Tote: £13.80. Dual F: £7.30. CSF: £35.64.

3.40 (2m): 1, SIKANDER A AZAM, N Williamson (3-1); **2, Flutterby Lady** (20-1); **3, Woodfield Gale** (4-1). 7-4 Fav Erin Alley. 9 ran. 1½, 1½. (C Grant) Tote: £4.10; £1.10, £2.10, £2.10. Dual F: £19.90. Trio: £20.20. CSF: £54.63.

QUADPOT: £110.10. **PLACEPOT:** £169.90.

Football

Hinchcliffe joins Spurs for security

Ian Ross and Martin Thorpe

ANDY HINCHCLIFFE will complete his move from Everton to Tottenham today before taking up residence in football's millionaires' row and ushering in a new era of player-power.

Yesterday Hinchcliffe was an accomplished left-back with a handsome salary. Today he is an accomplished left-back with financial security for life.

Howard Kendall, the Everton manager, said yesterday that the 28-year-old England international had agreed terms with both clubs. "Everything has been agreed and, subject to a medical, Andy will shortly become a Spurs player," he said.

The £3 million which Everton will receive for Hinchcliffe is perhaps the least significant facet of a transfer which underscores just how dramatic has been the switch in the sport's balance of power since Jean Marc Bosman won the historic ruling which revolutionised football's transfer system.

Hinchcliffe will sign a 3½-year contract with Tottenham worth £2.5 million or almost £14,000 a week. That figure is a composite of basic salary and an integrated signing-on fee of possibly £250,000 which will be spread over the duration of his stay in north London.

His bonus for leaving Everton without having asked for a transfer was £500,000. The club could ill afford it yet, perversely, they were delighted to hand it over. Had he not signed a new four-year contract three months ago — an agreement which included the pay-off clause — he would have been able to leave Everton on a free transfer in the summer when his old contract expired. He signed to remain at Goodison Park only after the bonus had been put in place to compensate him if, as has now happened, Everton chose to cash in on him.

Everton are also resigned to losing their captain Gary Speed, who yesterday refused the offer of a vastly improved new contract. The news that the Wales midfielder has turned it down will interest Newcastle and Sheffield Wednesday, whose £5 million offers for him were rejected last week.

Tottenham, meanwhile, are also set to sign Italy's World Cup midfielder Nicola Berti on a free transfer from Internazionale. According to reports from Italy, Berti's contract, which ran until June, has been taken over by Spurs.

Berti, who will team up again with Jürgen Klinsmann, his former Inter teammate, said he was moving to White Hart Lane with a lot to prove. "I was sad sitting on the bench and that was the main reason for my decision to leave Inter, although I really regret having to do so," he said.

Tottenham's head coach Christian Gross is also keen to land the Algeria midfielder Moussa Saib, who was in London yesterday for talks about a £4 million transfer from Valencia. Any deal, however, has been shelved until March.

Arsenal, who also checked on Saib, have turned their attention to the Croatia Zagreb midfielder Robert Prosinecki, who is thinking over a £1 million move in the summer.

Rangers dry up on Gascoigne

Patrick Glenn

THE Rangers manager Walter Smith yesterday refused to comment on reports that Paul Gascoigne had broken a club drinking curfew before Friday's Ne'erday match against Celtic.

Rangers players are forbidden to imbibe for 48 hours before a game but Gascoigne was said to have been seen with his long-time friend, Jimmy "Five Bellies" Gardner, in the Cameron House Hotel on Loch Lomondside for some 12 hours until early on New Year's Day.

The player was left on the bench for the Parkhead game, which Rangers lost 2–0, even though Smith had arranged a closed-doors match against Raith Rovers four days earlier in order to sharpen up Gascoigne, who had just come off a four-match suspension.

During the Old Firm match Gascoigne caused offence to some Celtic supporters by playing an imaginary flute, a gesture with Orange-Loyalist connotations, as he warmed up before replacing Jorg Albertz 18 minutes from time.

Smith has said that the England midfielder will be "dealt with internally" over the flute-playing act but gave no hint as to what form any possible disciplinary measures might take.

Milan have made a "verbal" offer to Olympique Marseille for the former Middlesbrough striker Fabrizio Ravanelli which the French club yesterday described as "an exchange for [the Sweden international] Andreas Andersson plus a large sum of money".

Milan, sixth in Serie A, expect to be without their injured Liberian striker George Weah for two months and saw their city rivals Internazionale go clear at the top on Sunday.

The Italian Ravanelli, bought for £5.3 million from Boro in September, has scored only two goals in eight games and is expected to agree to the move.

Sports Politics

Europe reaffirms Bosman ruling

Stephen Bates in Brussels

FOOTBALL's plea to be exempted from European Union trade and labour regulations was given short shrift by the European Commission here yesterday.

In the latest confrontation between a governing body wishing to retain control of its game and the EU's determination to apply regulations across the board, the commission made clear there would be no exemptions for football, or any other professional sport, and no retrospective lifting of European Court judgments affecting player transfers.

Padraig Flynn, the Irish social affairs commissioner, and Karel Van Miert, the Belgian commissioner in charge of EU trade competition policy, said in a statement: "There can be no question of professional sports being exempted or attempting to sidestep rulings from the Court of Justice."

The spat follows an attempt by Fifa, football's governing body, to secure relief from the European Court's Bosman judgment of two years ago, which gave players the right to move freely between clubs without compensation at the end of their contracts. The judgment also lifted limitations on the number of foreign EU players a club could field.

Before Christmas, Van Miert ordered motor racing's FIA to allow freer access for would-be grand prix organisers and warned that the FIA's 14-year exclusive Formula One broadcasting deal with Bernie Ecclestone was excessive. But it is with football that the major European confrontations are coming.

The commission has made it clear that it wants a relaxation in Fifa's rules over the licensing of players' agents, who currently have to deposit nearly £100,000 with Fifa as well as obtaining the recognition of their national football associations before setting up business. The commission regards this as a restraint of trade.

It is also examining Belgian and French complaints against Uefa, European football's governing body, for banning the Belgian side Excelsior Muscron from moving its Uefa Cup first-round match against Metz last September from its home ground to the larger Lille Metropole stadium, over the border in northern France.

Uefa says matches have to be played at home but the club argues that the decision damaged the fixture's profitability and broke EU regulations on the free movement of services across national boundaries.

Four goals shared in Portman Road drama



Cutting a dash . . . a close-cropped Gianfranco Zola chases down Ipswich's Matt Holland PHOTOGRAPH: PHIL COLE

Coca-Cup, quarter-final: Ipswich Town 2, Chelsea 2 (after 90 minutes)

Mathie keeps pot boiling

David Lacey

CHELSEA, their hold on the FA Cup already a distant memory, found little comfort in the Coca-Cola Cup at Portman Road last night. After taking a 2–0 lead shortly before half-time they were stunned by the strength and passion of an Ipswich revival which found the First Division side drawing level just past the hour.

Simple logic suggested that Chelsea's second cup-tie in four days would be no more rewarding than their first. After all, Ipswich had knocked out Manchester United in the third round of the Coca-Cola and United had just wiped the floor with Chelsea in the FA Cup.

Chelsea had Dennis Wise back from suspension and his absence had not helped their cause on Sunday. Again Ruud Gullit fielded a much-changed side for this competition; only six of last night's side had started the weekend match, Mark Hughes was on the bench and Gianluca Vialli was unfit. Yet with Wise and Roberto Di Matteo in midfield Chelsea still looked better balanced, although the latter.

Ipswich habitually play a neat passing game but last night the power of James Scowcroft in the air, and the regularity with which the high ball could find him, posed as great a threat to a Chelsea defence suspect against this form of attack.

With David Johnson, their leading scorer, cup-tied Ipswich relied heavily on Scowcroft and Alex Mathie continuing where Manchester United had left off.

In theory the tall Tore Andre Flo offered a similar danger to Ipswich but Chelsea's football suffered from an early torpor which denied their movements rhythm and penetration. After 19 minutes an injury which forced Andy Myers out of the game gave Gullit the chance to come on and get things going.

Ipswich, however, continued to set a brisker tempo with Scowcroft the central figure. But while corners were forced they achieved little in front of goal to worry Ed De Goey, and two minutes past the half-hour Chelsea did not so much take the lead as have it handed to them.

Richard Wright is a highly promising goalkeeper for the England Under-21 team but he stranded himself in coming for a long ball from Frank Leboeuf that he stood little chance of getting. Graeme Le Saux centred simply and Flo launched himself between Jason Cundy and Mark Venus to head into an empty net.

A near miss, when Danny Granville's shot was diverted behind by De Goey, raised Ipswich's hopes but as the first half ran into stoppage time they looked done for when Chelsea scored an excellent second goal. Zola allowed a ball from Gullit to run to Flo before sprinting past the defence to gather the Norwegian's pass and set up a tap-in for Le Saux.

Ipswich's response, however, was admirably prompt. Mauricio Taricco found Mathie in space and in range and after De Goey had pushed out his shot a little feebly the Argentinian followed up to score.

The Premiership side needed another goal to ease their minds and were nearly given one in the 56th minute when Venus's attempted clearance rebounded back to Di Matteo and allowed the Italian space for a dangerous cross. Cundy eventually rescued the situation by blocking Zola's shot.

Then Ipswich drew level in the 61st minute. Taricco's well-delivered pass released Stockwell on the right and from his low centre Mathie drove the ball into the net despite De Goey getting a hand to it.

Once again Chelsea were facing a cup of hemlock but their passing movements still carried considerably more threat than they had done earlier, especially as Ipswich were now leaving gaps in their efforts to win the tie.

Ipswich Town (3-5-2): Wright; Cundy, Mowbray, Venus; Stockwell, Holland, Williams, Dyer, Taricco; Scowcroft, Mathie.
Chelsea (4-4-2): De Goey; Sinclair, Leboeuf, Myers, Granville, Di Matteo, Lambourde, Wise, Le Saux; Flo, Zola.
Referee: P Durkin (Portland).

Newcastle ask FA to switch tie

NEWCASTLE UNITED have contacted the Football Association in an attempt to have their FA Cup fourth-round tie against Stevenage Borough switched to St James' Park.

Newcastle believe the Vauxhall Conference club's ground is not big enough to host the game on January 25 despite plans to install 1,400 extra seats which will increase the capacity to 8,000.

Representatives from Newcastle visited Broadhall Way yesterday and the Premiership club insisted later that the ground was "totally unsuitable bearing in mind the immense interest in the tie and the anticipated level of support from Newcastle United fans for this match".

However the Stevenage chairman Victor Green said he was determined not to concede home advantage and accused Newcastle of trying to bully his club into submission. "They obviously came here with the intention of just paying lip service in inspecting our facilities," he said. "There is no problem with our ground."

Green added that Newcastle's manager Kenny Dalglish had asked him to consider playing the game at a neutral venue but said that too was out of the question.

Stevenage's 2–1 victory at Swindon Town in the third round of the Cup on Saturday has prompted the First Division club to put eight of their players up for sale. In a similar move, Huddersfield Town have made their entire reserve team available for transfer.

Coventry City will play Bayern Munich in a friendly at Highfield Road on January 27. Sunderland have signed the goalkeeper Luke Weaver from Leyton Orient for £250,000.

Royle rejects Bradford job as Warnock goes into the frame

JOE ROYLE has turned down the chance to take charge at Bradford City, who had attempted to lure the former Everton manager back into football less than 24 hours after dismissing Chris Kamara, writes Ian Ross.

Royle's rejection of the First Division club, coming after he also turned down approaches from West Bromwich Albion and Northern Ireland, lends support to the view that he is waiting to return to Manchester City, one of his former clubs, should Frank Clark's tenure end.

Bradford are now likely to make a formal approach to Oldham's Neil Warnock, having also abandoned their attempts to convince the Rangers midfielder Stuart McCall to return as player-manager to the club where he started his career.

World Cup rebuff for Beckenbauer

GERMAN football officials yesterday disowned Franz Beckenbauer's suggestion, already rejected by England, that England and Germany make a combined bid for the 2006 World Cup.

Wolfgang Niersbach of the German Football Federation claimed that the former German captain had been misquoted and said that Fifa would not permit any two nations to co-host the World Cup after 2002, when the finals will be shared by South Korea and Japan.

"Fifa has said no in the future, never again," he said.

Earlier this week Beckenbauer was interviewed at the Football Expo '98 trade show in Singapore, where he is lobbying for Germany's bid to stage the 2006 finals.

"We are both wasting money," said Beckenbauer of the multimillion-pound campaigns being run by England and Germany. "It will split the European vote and if it goes on like this South Africa will get the 2006 World Cup."

Niersbach yesterday dismissed this statement as "a complete misunderstanding" and then fuelled a controversy of his own by claiming that England and Germany had agreed to let Uefa decide which European bid would go forward.

"If Uefa decide that it's England, we will accept it," he said. "And the English have underlined that if it's Germany, they will accept it also. That's very clear."

Not so, retorted Jo Gibbons, spokeswoman for the England campaign. "That agreement never took place," she said. "Fifa have confirmed that it is not up to the confederations to decide who goes forward. Any country can bid for the World Cup."

Sport in brief

Athletics

Haile Gebrselassie, the Olympic and world 10,000 metre champion, will compete over 2,000m in the Bupa Indoor Grand Prix in Birmingham on February 15 in an attack on Eamonn Coghlan's 11-year-old world record of 4min 54.07sec, writes Duncan Mackay. But Michael Johnson and Donovan Bailey are boycotting the event after not getting paid for competing in Britain last year.

Britain's leading javelin thrower Steve Backley has flown to South Africa to train with the Czech Jan Zelezny.

Chess

Anatoly Karpov leads Vishy Anand 3–2 with one game left in the Fide World Championship in Lausanne after a 55-move draw in the fifth game, writes Leonard Barden. The final game is today. Matthew Sadler won the Hastings Premier with a round to spare.

Results

Football

AUTO WINDSCREENS SHIELD
Second round
Northern Section

Mansfield (0) 1	Wrexham (0) 0
Whitehall 78 (pen)	1,325

TENNENTS SCOTTISH CUP
Second round

Livingston (0) 2	Berwick (0) 1
Harvey 61	Irvine 65
McMartin 86	1,160

SCOTTISH LEAGUE
First Division

St Mirren (2) 3	Greenock Morton (0) 2
Mendes 12, 16	Blair 62
Yardley 50	Mancod 84
4,555	

RYMAN LEAGUE: First Division: Postponed: Croydon v Billericay Tn.
DR MARTENS CUP: Second-round replays: All matches postponed.
SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier Division: Bridport 0, Taunton Tn 5. Postponed: Crippenham Tn v Tiverton Tn.
PONTINS LEAGUE: Premier: Aston Villa 0, Man Utd 1. All other matches postponed. First: Huddersfield 1, Leicester 3; Oldham 1, Middlesbrough 1; West Brom 0, Grimsby 1. Second: All matches postponed. Third: Scarborough 1, Wigan 1; Scunthorpe 1, Chesterfield 4. Postponed: Walsall v Bury.
AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First Division: Wimbledon 1, Oxford Utd 3; Millwall 0, Portsmouth 0; Southampton 1, Arsenal 3. All other matches postponed.
HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Hundy 5, Deveronvale 2. Postponed: Nairn Co v Fraserburgh.

Tennis

ATP QATAR OPEN: Second round: T Henman (GB) bt G Raoux (Fr) 7–5, 6–4; G Ivanisevic (Cro) bt M Rosset (Switz) 6–7, 7–5, 7–5; B Karbacher (Ger) bt M Larsson (Swe) w/o; P Korda (Cz) bt L Burgsmuller (Ger) 6–3, 6–2.
ATP AUSTRALIAN HARDCOURT CHAMPIONSHIP (Adelaide): First round: O Kewitzas (Sr) bt K Carlsen (Den) 7–6, 7–5; A Agassi (US) bt S Sargsian (Arm) 4–6, 6–3, 6–3. Second round: J Stoltenberg (Aus) bt J Bjorkman (Swe) 7–6, 6–1; M Rosset (Fr) bt T Johansson (Swe) 4–6, 6–4, 6–4; V Spadea (US) bt S Dosedel (Cz) 6–1, 6–2; L Hewitt (Aus) bt M Woodforde (Aus) 4–6, 7–6, 6–1.
AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S HARDCOURT TOURNAMENT (Gold Coast): Second round: B Schultz-McCarthy (Neth) bt C Morariu (US) 6–4, 6–2; N Dragomir (Rom) bt M Grzybowska (Pol) 7–6, 6–4; A Sugiyama (Japan) bt C Barclay (Aus) 7–6, 6–1; S Pitsiokka (Aut) bt F Schnyder (Switz) 6–7, 6–4, 6–4; S Pitkowski (Fr) bt D Chladkova (Cz) 6–1, 7–5; Wang Shi-Ting (Tai) bt R McQuillan (Aus) 1–6, 6–4, 6–4; M de Swardt (SA) bt J Kandarr (Ger) 6–4, 2–6, 6–4.
HOPMAN CUP (Perth): Australia 2, Spain 1 (Aus first): A Elwood lost to A Sanchez Vicario 2–6, 4–6; P Rafter bt C Moya 7–5, 1–6, 7–6; Rafter/Elwood bt Moya/Sanchez 7–6, 6–2; South Africa 2, Germany 1 (SA first): A Coetzer lost to A Huber 3–6, 3–6; W Ferreira bt T Haas 5–4, 3–6, 6–1; Ferreira/Coetzer bt Haas/Huber 6–2, 6–2.

Basketball

BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Birmingham 124, Chester 102.
EUROLEAGUE: Group Fr: Real Madrid 75, Estudiantes 64. Group Ha: Hapoel Jerusalem 68, AEK Athens 88.
NBA: Indiana 90, Phoenix 81; Cleveland 100, Houston 70; Vancouver 87, LA Lakers 100; Chicago 90, Boston 72; Dallas 108, Denver 90; Utah 98, Philadelphia 85 (ot); Seattle 102, Charlotte 81; Sacramento 105, LA Clippers 89.

Chess

FIDE WORLD C'SHIP (Lausanne): Fifth Game: A Kurpov ½ V Anand (Ind) ½ (Karpov leads 3–2 with one game left).
HASTINGS PREMIER: Round Nine: M Hebden 1, J Nunn 0; C Ward 0, S Rozentalis (Lith) 1; M Sadler v L McShane and V Tkachiev (Kaz) v E Relange (Fr) drew. Final scores: Sadler 7; Relange, Rozentalis 5½; Tkachiev 5.

Cricket

SHEFFIELD SHIELD (Melbourne): New South Wales 331–1 (M Slater 137, R Davison 118no, C Richards 89no) v Victoria.

Darts

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (Frimley Green): Second round: P Johnstone (Scot) bt C Mason (Eng) 3–0; R Bennett (Wales) bt K Painter (Eng) 3–1.

Ice Hockey

NHL: NY Rangers 4, Carolina 2; Washington 5, Toronto 3; Detroit 2, Phoenix 0; NY Islanders 2, Pittsburgh 4; Colorado 1, Calgary 3; San Jose 1, St Louis 5.

Motor Sport

PARIS-DAKAR RALLY: Eighth stage (Smara to Zouerat, 618km): Cars: 1, K Shinozuka (Japan) Mitsubishi 4hr 7min 2sec; 2, J-P Fontenay (Fr) Mitsubishi at 5min 39sec. Overall: 1, Fontenay 15hr 20min 49sec; 2, BSaby (Fr) Mitsubishi at 1min 10sec. Motorcycles: 1, S Peterhansel (Fr) Yamaha 4hr 35min 38sec; 2, C Sotelo (Sp) Cagiva at 58sec. Overall: 1, Peterhansel 16hr 10min 3sec; 2, F Meoni (It) KTM at 2min 25sec.

Sailing

WHITBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE: Fourth leg: 1, Swedish Match (Swe) 261 miles to finish; 2, Toshiba (US) 13.6 miles behind leader; 3, Merit Cup (Mon) 28.3; 4, Chessie Racing (US) 30.2; 5, EF Language (Swe) 36.2; 6, Silk Cut (GB) 54.7; 7, Innovation Kvaerner (Nor) 59.4; 8, BrunelSunergy (Neth) 84.8; 9, EF Education (Swe) 122.2.

Snooker

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (Blackpool): Ninth qualifying round: J Delaney (Ire) bt R Michael (Eng) 10–4; C Stands (Scot) bt N Manning (Eng) 10–5; S Bingham (Eng) bt I Hurdman (Eng) 10–1; M Nuttall (Eng) bt G O'Connor (Ire) 10–4; G Lees (Eng) bt P McPhillips (Scot) 10–6; I Sargeant (Wales) bt S Day (Eng) 10–6; S Parker (Eng) bt S Murphy (Ire) 10–4; A Higginson (Eng) bt D McDonnell (Eng) 10–6; C McRae (Eng) bt L Mallen (Eng) 10–6; S Rowswell (Eng) bt S Lanigan (Eng) 10–7; M Fu (HK) bt P Sweeney (Eng) 10–5; A Rose (Eng) bt D Walker (Eng) 10–6; A Meek (Eng) bt D Colas (Eng) 10–5; J Cundy (Eng) bt D Leary (NI) 7–1; R Nelson (Eng) bt M O'Sullivan (Eng) 10–2; L Fernandez (Eng) bt E Munro (Scot) 10–3; M Johnston-Allen (Eng) bt J O'Boye (Eng) 10–5; S Bedford (Eng) bt J Buckingham (Eng) 10–4; M Powell (Eng) bt L Dodd (Eng) 10–8.

Fixtures

Football

PONTINS LEAGUE: First Division: Bolton v Notts County (7.0).
AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First: Norwich v QPR (7.30).
FAI CUP: First replay: Dundalk v Swilly Rvrs (7.45).

Tennis

Henman grabs his chance

Richard Jago in Doha

TIM HENMAN set up what should be a supremely testing quarter-final against the Czech Petr Korda here in the Qatar Open after surviving a rough ride both from the wind and the Frenchman Guillaume Raoux yesterday.

The Englishman's 7–5, 6–4 win was much harder than the score indicates, for Henman dropped his opening service game, should have gone 15–40 down in the ninth game and had to save four break points in the seventh and ninth games of the second set.

In between there were further signs that Henman is adding to his game, though his first concern yesterday was to find ways to counter an opponent with a powerful arm, a supple wrist and some ferocious ground strokes. "He had never beaten me," said Henman, "and I had a feeling he wanted to put the record straight."

Bespectacled, balding and rather burly, Raoux could be a bank manager but his instincts are more those of a gambler. On an evening when the swirling wind played its part, he was too wasteful with his considerable resources.

While the Frenchman either failed to seize his chances or had them ripped from his grasp by the Englishman, Henman again proved himself a sharp player of big points. He required only one chance, having worked his way to 40–30 in the 10th game of the second set, and produced a chip-and-charge on Raoux's second serve which forced a backhand driving error.

Henman looks sturdier — he is said to be 10lb heavier from his weights-and-diet regimen in December — but did not give much of a clue whether this has produced greater weight of shot. In the conditions Raoux often looked least certain against the floated strokes, and Henman showed a growing maturity by tempering his attacking instincts and mixing backhand slices into the topspin armoury.

Later Goran Ivanisevic, the No. 4 seed, conjured an unlikely escape from match point down to beat his friend Marc Rosset, the former Olympic champion, 6–7, 7–5, 7–5. Ivanisevic, Greg Rusedski's likely semi-final opponent, trailed 3–5 in the second set but Rosset delivered four double faults while serving for the match, one of them on the match point.

● Andre Agassi fought back from a set and 2–3 down to beat the Armenian world No. 69 Sargis Sargsian 4–6, 6–3, 6–3 in the Australian Hardcourt Championship when they resumed a rain-hit first-round match in Adelaide yesterday. The American is now ranked No. 119 in the world.



Henman . . . killer instinct

Sailing

Now Swedish Match has a striking look

A STORMING finish to the fourth leg of the Whitbread Round The World Race seems likely here late tonight, writes Bob Fisher in Auckland.

The leader, Gunnar Krantz's Swedish Match, was only 13 miles ahead of Dennis Conner's Toshiba yesterday evening with 260 miles to go around Cape Reinga and down the east coast to Auckland.

Not that other skippers have lost interest, least of all Paul Cayard, the leg's early leader with EF Language. Yesterday he made a determined move to the south, crossing the sterns of almost all other boats in an attempt to place himself for the wind change to southeasterly.

It has paid off. He has moved from eighth to fifth and could catch George Collins's Chessie Racing and Grant Dalton's Merit Cup, possibly before Cape Reinga.

Even Lawrie Smith's Silk Cut, sixth, 55 miles behind the leader, is not out of a possible podium placing.

هكذا من الاصل

Cricket

Mike Selvey on the enigmatic batting genius who succeeds Courtney Walsh for the forthcoming Test series against England

Lara will captain West Indies

BRIAN LARA's dream of captaining West Indies became reality yesterday when he was appointed to lead the side against England and out of the wilderness of a major slump in form.

The appointment will be greeted with relief in some quarters, if only for its inevitability after the 3-0 Test whitewash that Courtney Walsh's squad suffered in Pakistan, but with ill-disguised dissatisfaction in others, notably Jamaica.

That is the home of Walsh, whose supposedly temporary reign as captain after replacing Richie Richardson in 1996 has ended after 23 matches.

"It's a great honour, but it's a very tricky seat to be in at this moment in West Indies cricket," Lara said. "It is a challenging and exciting role. I'm looking forward to great things from myself and from my players."

As ever in Caribbean cricket, politics had a role. The West Indies Cricket Board delayed its decision until meetings between the three selectors — Wes Hall, Michael Findlay and Joey Carew — and the team coach Malcolm Marshall produced a recommendation of Lara.

Lara flew from Trinidad yesterday to the board's headquarters in Antigua, where he was told of the decision and no doubt reminded of the responsibilities attached to the job and of what will be required of him.

His appointment represents a climb-down by the board, which had overruled the selectors' recommendation for Lara to lead the side in Pakistan. The board was concerned, among other things, about his poor disciplinary record. Walsh kept the job and despite the humiliation in Pakistan, where they lost all three Tests by huge margins, and their failure to beat England in the final of the Champions Cup in Sharjah three weeks ago, some thought that Walsh would remain captain at least for the first Test of the coming series. It is in Kingston at the end of the month, and Lara's reception at Sabina Park is unlikely to be cordial.

Lara's genius with the bat has never been in doubt. The stylish left-hander holds the world records for Test (375) and first-class (501 not out) scores and is regarded as one of the finest batsmen of his time. In 48 Tests he has scored 10 centuries in 4,133 runs at an average of 51.66.

Through his batting deeds he is already a wealthy man and the captaincy will make him wealthier still, but this does not make him a team man, and some sources predict that he will not find it easy to gain the confidence and trust of his senior players.

Moreover, his batting has been distracted recently, with not even a half-century to his name in Pakistan. Giving him the job, it was argued, would focus his mind and improve his form. Playing for West Indies, one might have thought, ought to have been stimulation enough.

Yet short of running a cooperative there was little alternative to Lara. Walsh is 35 and his shelf-life as a fast bowler is coming to an end, and his fellow Jamaican Jimmy Adams's leadership of the A team in South Africa recently was not a huge success.

Now Lara has got the job he craved. On the surface he has been groomed for it ever since his teens, yet captaincy of West Indies, with the political, ambassadorial and arbitrational roles that accompany it, might not sit easily on his shoulders. It is up to him to prove himself worthy of it.

Rugby Union

England's top clubs pull out of Europe

Robert Armstrong

ENGLAND's money-starved first division clubs last night pulled out of European competition in a concerted attempt to force Twickenham to restructure the domestic season.

The 12 clubs in Allied Dunbar Premiership One were unanimous in opting not to compete in next season's Heineken Cup and European Conference competitions even though they felt European rugby was "hugely important for the future of the game".

The decision was announced after a four-hour meeting at a hotel near Heathrow airport. The question of relegation and promotion within the top two divisions was not discussed but the chances are that there will be no relegation from Premiership One at the end of this season and that the division will be increased to 14 clubs to increase revenue.

The pool stages of next year's two European competitions would have been played in a six-week block between early October and mid-November — effectively shutting down the league programme.

With yesterday's decision the owners and backers of the top clubs are making a clear protest vote at the structure of the domestic season which, they claim, does not give them sufficient opportunities to make money.

The announcement will be a serious setback to the tournament organisers. The Heineken European Cup is in its third season and reaches a climax in three weeks when Bath take on the holders Brive in the final in Bordeaux.

A statement issued after the meeting said: "European rugby was felt to be hugely important for the future of the game, but the existing structure often worked to the detriment of domestic league rugby. It was therefore decided, as from next season, not to participate in the existing ERC competitions in order to create a better structure."

The clubs' stance leaves the way clear for the launch of an Anglo-French competition. Several English club owners have recently been talking to French sides and one Welsh club are also thought to have been involved. It had been presumed that the clubs would seek a meeting with European Rugby Cup officials to discuss next season's tournament rather than take such immediate action.

It leaves Twickenham facing yet another headache. Since the game went open almost 2½ years ago the English domestic structure has been riven by internal arguments as to who should run the newly-professional sport.

Sources said that there were initial splits between the representatives at yesterday's meeting but they eventually came to a unanimous vote. One bright aspect was that all the major backers will stay in the game; they agreed "to represent their clubs on the board and to act in all matters as one".

Kenya v England A

Wobbly Kenya face follow-on

KENYA slumped to 154 for eight before a rainstorm ended play 90 minutes early in their three-day game against England A at the Ruaraka Sports Club in Nairobi. The tourists had declared on 402 for four, with Darren Maddy scoring a superb 202.

England accelerated quickly from their overnight 278 for two to reach their declaration total with a flurry of boundaries as Maddy progressed rapidly from his overnight 136 and David Sales hit a quickfire 48 off 30 deliveries.

Their bowlers, Paul Hutchison, James Ormond, Mark Ealham and Ashley Giles, then put Kenya in danger of following on. Hutchison soon dismissed both openers and Ealham, who finished with three for 29, ended the dogged resistance of Ravindu Shah who made 57.

Dougie Brown watched the game after arriving in Nairobi yesterday as replacement for Chris Silverwood, who is joining the senior squad in the West Indies.

Brown will stay for the rest of the A tour to Sri Lanka before flying off to the West Indies himself for the one-day series in March.

The Kenyan Cricket Association is to protest to Lord's at the interpretation of the rules used to decide Sunday's one-day international.

The match was awarded to England on a faster scoring rate after a rainstorm halted their victory chase 31 runs short with 4.3 overs remaining.

But the Kenyans believe the calculations were incorrect and claim the home association should rule on the dispute. They want a response from the England and Wales Cricket Board by tomorrow, before Saturday's third and final one-day international.

The EB is expected to accept Kenya's interpretation, leaving England A needing victory on Saturday to seal the one-day series.

ENGLAND A
First Innings (overnight: 278–2)

D L Maddy c Suji b Shah	202
M A Ealham c Tikolo b Shah	14
D J Sales not out	47
A Flintoff not out	2
Extras (lb8, w1, nb4)	11
Total (for 4 dec. 90.4 overs)	402

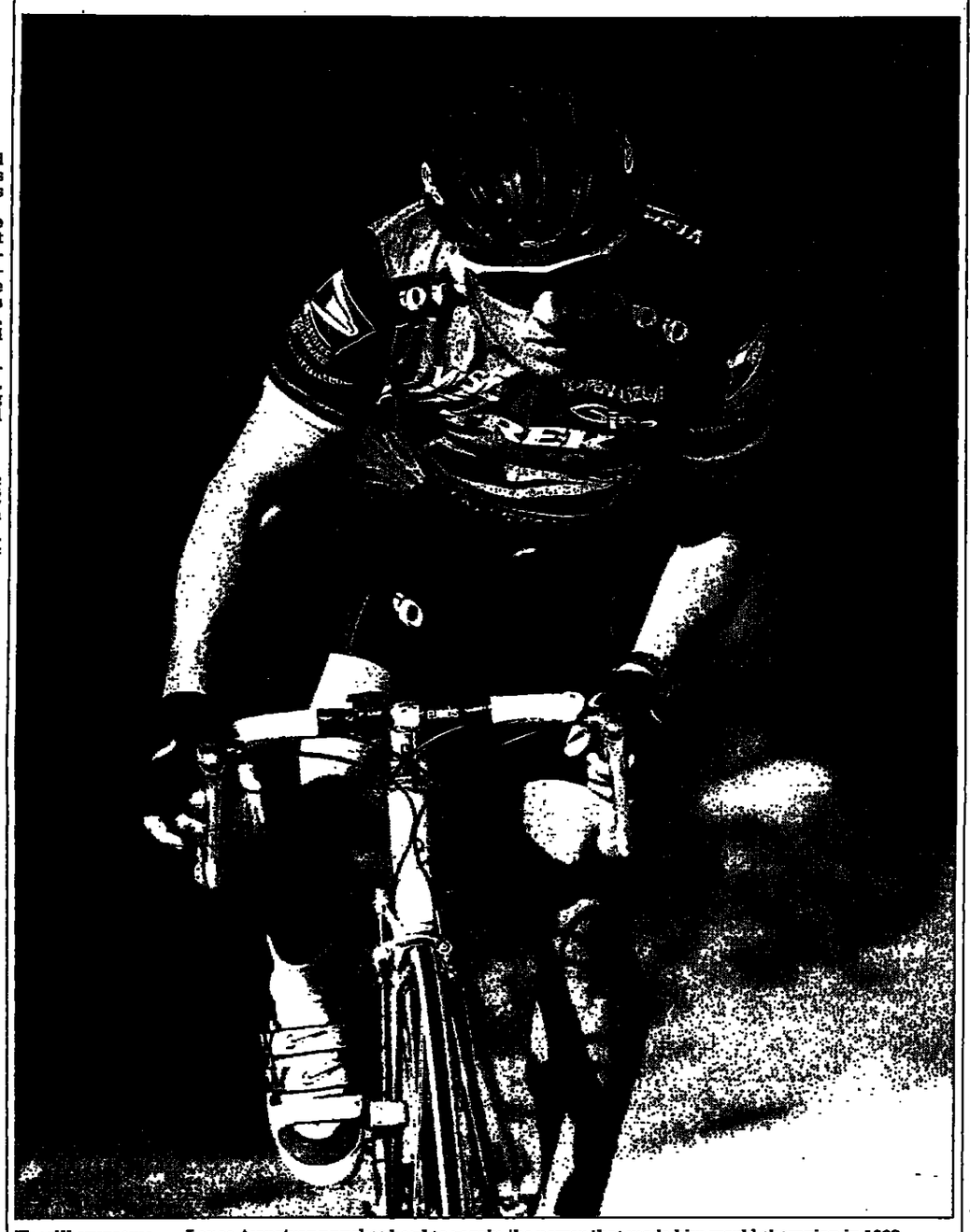
Fall of wickets: 48, 235, 237, 380.
Did not bat: A F Giles, J Ormond, †C M W Read, D A Cosker, P M Hutchison.
Bowlings: Suji 15–0–53–0; Angara 11–2–48–0; Shah 13.4–2–60–2; Karim 21–4–85–1; Dean 4–0–27–0; Odumbe 7–1–28–0; Patel 5–0–37–0; Tikolo 3–0–16–0; Onyango 11–2–51–1; Vadher 1–0–12–0.

KENYA
First Innings

†K Otieno lbw b Hutchison	0
H Vadher b Hutchison	5
R Shah c Giles b Ealham	57
M Odumbe c Flintoff b Ormond	16
S Tikolo c Knight b Giles	43
T Suji b Ealham	0
B Patel b Ealham	4
*A Karim c Ormond b Giles	24
L Onyango not out	1
Z Dean not out	0
Extras (lb2, nb2)	4
Total (for 8, 47 overs)	154

Fall of wickets: 1, 12, 44, 92, 92, 119, 151, 153.
To bat: J Angara.
Bowlings: Ormond 14–5–34–1; Hutchison 9–0–38–2; Cosker 9–2–48–0; Ealham 10–3–29–3; Giles 5–0–13–2.
Umpires: S Patel and M Khan.

Former champion winning battle against illness



He will overcome . . . Lance Armstrong pushes hard to regain the power that made him world champion in 1993

Armstrong back from cancer

William Fotheringham on the Texan aiming to ride tall in the saddle this year

"THERE has never been a comeback like it," says Lance Armstrong, world champion in 1993 and twice a stage winner in the Tour de France, who is *set to race again in February*, less than 18 months after he was diagnosed as having testicular cancer.

The 26-year-old from Austin, Texas, will spend the rest of this month training with his new team, sponsored by the US Postal Service, and expects to return to racing in Europe in the Tour of Andalucia in February, earlier than expected. "Tests indicate that I'm further along the road than people might expect," he says.

Specialists treating the United States' leading road cyclist are "95 per cent certain" that he has won his battle with the cancer, and Armstrong has found a team willing to risk hiring a rider with suspect health.

"I'm not sure what is going to happen," he says. "I'm going completely into the unknown. It's not only that I don't know what will happen, but my oncologists don't know. This is the first time in history that this has been done."

Armstrong was diagnosed as having cancer in October 1996, and it was found to have spread from his testicles to his abdomen and lungs. It was so advanced that "I was diagnosed Wednesday afternoon and was having surgery on Thursday," he recalls.

In one operation he had lesions removed from his brain and doctors gave him only a 60 per cent chance of survival.

The Texan finished his chemotherapy treatment more than a year ago. It included having platinum pumped through his veins and would make him vomit for 24 hours at a time. It has left Armstrong with a pattern of light-coloured burn scars all over his skin.

However, he continued to ride between visits to Indianapolis for treatment and began training in earnest soon after he had finished chemotherapy. At one point he began to hint at making a comeback to racing last September. Twice he found that training made him run down, leaving him "completely terrified" that the cancer might return.

As he trained other difficulties arose. Shortly before his cancer was diagnosed Armstrong had signed a two-year, $2.5 million (£1.4 million) contract with a new team sponsored by Cofidis, France's biggest telephone credit company. When he went public about his illness the team promised him support, but as he lay in hospital they renegotiated the deal, citing a clause which stated that Armstrong "had to be fit to race".

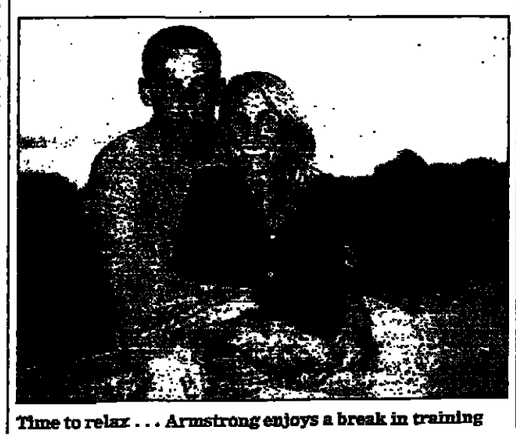
His wage was cut to $1.2 million dollars for 1997 but Armstrong says "to date they have paid less than $600,000 and to be honest I've written the rest off." Their offer for this year was $150,000, which Armstrong describes as "completely disrespectful". The deal the Texan eventually signed for US Postal was only slightly better and heavily performance-related His attempts to find a sponsor willing to have faith in him have left Armstrong bitter.

But his team travails apart, Armstrong is surprisingly positive about his illness, which he goes so far as to describe as "the best thing that ever happened in my life." It has, he feels, changed him from a man obsessed with the next cycle race to a humbler person. The Lance Armstrong Foundation, which he started in order to raise awareness of urological cancer, is now "nearest and dearest to me."

The only comparable case of a cyclist coming back from serious illness is that of Armstrong's fellow American Greg LeMond, who came close to death due to loss of blood in a shooting accident in 1987 and struggled for 18 months before winning the Tour de France and world championship in 1989. But LeMond was not recovering from cancer.

Armstrong is clear in his mind: if he cannot get close to his previous high level of competitiveness he will simply give up cycling.

"But they say anything that doesn't kill you makes you stronger," he says. If that is the case Armstrong will be the strongest cyclist in the bunch next year.



Time to relax . . . Armstrong enjoys a break in training

Carling keeps Quins waiting

Robert Armstrong

WILL CARLING's retirement, if it comes at all this year, will almost certainly be later rather than sooner, after yesterday's self-imposed deadline for a definite decision passed without a date being set.

Financial and contractual considerations, and a long-standing arrangement with a Sunday newspaper, are likely to dictate that the 32-year-old England centre remains a Harlequins player at least until the end of the season.

Carling is likely to use his next Mail on Sunday column at the weekend to announce that he has agreed a working compromise with Andy Keast, director of rugby at The Stoop. Two outstanding issues need to be resolved: whether the former England captain must attend every training session in order to be considered for selection, and whether he can expect regular first-team rugby should he decide to stay with Quins, who at full complement have five centres to choose from.

According to Carling, who will be out of action for the next three weeks in any case because of a broken hand, senior players urged him to reconsider for 48 hours after the possibility of his retiring was aired at a tetchy meeting with Keast on Monday.

There is no doubt that Carling's sudden exit would be a blow to Harlequins, who have an outside chance of winning the Premiership (they lie joint third). But money and peer pressure must inevitably come into the equation when he considers his future.

When he finally quits, the player who won 72 caps for his country can look forward to a testimonial worth about £100,000. He is being paid £125,000 a season under his three-year contract, though he is in effect a part-time professional because of his business commitments. And although it is hard to imagine his team-mates, some of whom are paid half that, twisting Carling's arm to stay on and win a golden handshake, Keast would clearly prefer to have a fit, fully motivated England centre on hand for the remaining 13 Premiership games.

Carling's former England partner Jeremy Guscott — they had a record 44 appearances together — expressed the hope that he would not make a rash decision. "I hope Will remembers the players we both know who bitterly regretted their premature decisions to retire," he said. "Like them, he has much rugby left in him."

Sri Lanka v Zimbabwe: First Test, first day

Atapattu's unbeaten best lifts Sri Lanka's early gloom

SRI LANKA'S Marvan Atapattu hit a career-best unbeaten 129 as his side reached 265 for four on the opening day of the first Test against Zimbabwe at the Asgiriya stadium in Kandy.

Sri Lanka won the toss but Sanath Jayasuriya, who scored six, and Roshan Mahanama, with seven, quickly fell to the paceman Heath Streak in damp conditions.

From 33 for two, Atapattu lifted his side with a 140-run stand for the third wicket with Aravinda de Silva, who made a rapid 75 including nine fours and a six.

Zimbabwe broke the partnership when the leg-spinner Adam Huckle had de Silva caught at cover point by Andrew Whittal, who later claimed the wicket of Arjuna Ranatunga for 27.

Atapattu's second Test century included 17 fours, three coming in one over from the spinner Paul Strang in the afternoon session.

The Australian strike bowler Glenn McGrath's chances of playing in the third Test against South Africa hinge on medical tests on a stomach injury. He initially believed the pain stemmed from a strained muscle but now fears he has torn an abdominal muscle.

SRI LANKA First Innings

S Jayasuriya lbw Streak	6
M Atapattu not out	129
R Mahanama c Campbell b Streak	7
A de Silva c Whittall b Huckle	75
*A Ranatunga b Whittall	27
H Tillekeratne not out	11
Extras (lb1, nb9)	10
Total (for 4)	265

Fall of wickets: 16, 33, 173, 226.
To bat: R Kaluwitharana, C Vaas, R Pushpakumara, M Muralitharan, J Silva.
Bowlings: Streak 24–6–59–2; B Strang 21–4–65–0; P Strang 20–6–69–0; A Whittall 14–2–31–1; A Huckle 11–2–41–1.
ZIMBABWE: *A Campbell, G Flower, G Rennie, A Flower, C Wishart, H Streak, P Strang, A Whittall, A Huckle, B Strang, M Goodwin.

Boxing

Woodhall given title shot and home edge against Malinga

RICHIE WOODHALL has been given the chance to challenge South Africa's Thulane "Sugarboy" Malinga for the WBC super-middleweight title in front of his home supporters at the Telford Ice Rink on Saturday February 7, *writes John Rawling*.

Woodhall, 29, has tasted defeat only once in 22 professional contests and it came in his only previous world title fight, when he challenged Keith Holmes of the United States for the WBC middleweight title in Washington in October 1996. Handicapped by an elbow injury which later required surgery and kept him out of action for 11 months, he was stopped in the 11th round.

Malinga, who is officially 33 but may be four years older, is a familiar figure in British rings. After losing controversially to Chris Eubank and Nigel Benn, he won the WBC super-middleweight title from Benn in 1996.

He lost it in his first defence, against Vincenzo Nardiello of Italy, but regained it with surprising ease last month by unanimously outpointing Robin Reid at the London Arena, where Woodhall was a ringside commentator for BBC Radio.

"He's a crafty fighter but he likes to operate at his own pace behind his jab," said Woodhall. "When he fights me I will be carrying the fight to him and I won't be letting him get into any sort of rhythm."

Last week Woodhall was thinking only in terms of a European challenge to his Frank Warren stablemate Dean Francis.

"When I heard I had got the Malinga fight I was delighted but I imagined I would have to travel to South Africa for it," he said.

"When Frank said it was in Telford I nearly fainted. In 24 hours I have sold about 500 tickets. Last time I went for a title I had that elbow injury. Now everything is right and I have no excuses. I have to deliver the goods for my fans."

Rugby League

Saints quick to fill their chair as Ashton resigns in disgust

Andy Wilson

MYSTERY last night surrounded the resignation of Eric Ashton after 4½ years as chairman of St Helens. He was highly popular in the town — quite a feat for a man who spent 20 years as a player and coach at Wigan — and presided over Saints' Super League and Challenge Cup double in 1996, making him the first man to win at Wembley as a captain, coach and chairman.

But he has felt since August that other members of the six-man board have been angling to take over and resigned at Tuesday night's meeting. Tom Ellard, a former head teacher who joined the board at the same time as Ashton 15 years ago, takes over.

"I can't work with people I can't trust," Ashton said yesterday. "I have given the other directors every chance to tell me if they wanted to take over as chairman but they didn't respond. I still felt something was going to happen and I've resigned before it does. I'm disgusted really." But he remains on the board.

Ellard said: "Eric has been a tremendous chairman and is a personal friend. I'm sure he will continue his excellent work for the club."

The news comes as a shock because, under Ashton, St Helens have appeared a happy, friendly club, in contrast to the boardroom shenanigans at Wigan which culminated in last autumn's takeover. There were problems in Saints' dressing-room last season as, after retaining the cup, they slipped in the league and performed poorly in the World Club Championship. Alan Hunte, their Great Britain three-quarter, asked for a transfer and has now moved to Hull.

But Saints have operated adroitly in the transfer market this winter, pulling in £400,000 in off-loading seven players, of whom only Hunte will be seriously missed, and recruiting six replacements of much higher quality, at a cost so far of the £300,000 they paid Warrington for Paul Sculthorpe.

However, they can expect to pay more than the £50,000 they offered yesterday for the 22-year-old winger Chris Smith, a bid described by Castleford's chief executive Richard Wright as "an insult". Smith has already signed a two-year contract with Saints but Castleford retain his registration until the clubs agree a fee.

Featherstone also have a new chairman. Steve Wagner has stepped down, although he will continue to represent the First and Second Division clubs on the Rugby Football League's board of directors, and Richard Evans returns for his second stint in the chair.

Hinchcliffe on millionaires' row, page 14

Chelsea hope for safe harbour, page 14

Rugby clubs to boycott Europe, page 15

Armstrong back on chain gang, page 15

SportsGuardian

Ketsbaia miss sends tie into extra-time



Tough in the tackle . . . the Newcastle United right-back Steve Watson gets the better of Michael Owen during last night's match at St James' Park PHOTOGRAPH: STU FORSTER

Coca-Cola Cup, quarter-final: Newcastle United 0, Liverpool 0 (after 90 minutes)

Liverpool lose their way

Michael Walker sees chances go begging at both ends as normal time is not enough

LIVERPOOL's season moved into a period of extra-time at St James' Park last night. Unable to convert their narrow superiority over Newcastle United into a winning goal, Liverpool, at least at the final whistle of 90 minutes, were still maintaining an interest in the competition which offers their only realistic prospect of silverware this year.

Had Robbie Fowler or Michael Owen been sharper with their finishing, they would have been safely through by then but the two were uncharacteristically wayward and Liverpool were thankful that John Beresford fluffed a sitter five minutes from the end.

Despite Liverpool's supposed crisis of confidence Roy Evans had insisted that changes from the Coventry game "would not be wholesale", a statement he stuck by. Out went Bjorn Tore Kvarme, unsurprisingly, and Karl-Heinz Riedle. But David James, the man under most pressure, retained his place in goal as Evans had said. Brad Friedel, the American he was at such pains to sign, was again on the bench, therefore. But Michael Owen was back.

Kenny Dalglish also made changes from Sunday's FA Cup team, David Batty returning and the young Irishman Aaron Hughes given a full debut. Faustino Asprilla, however, so disappointing against Everton, was missing, as was Stuart Pearce.

Dalglish clearly wanted no repetition of the way Steve McManaman had dictated the tempo when the sides last met 10 days ago and Hughes' principal task was the stifling of the willowy one.

As early as the 10th minute the 18-year-old was shown the difficulty of the job when a beautiful McManaman dummy left him static and startled. Had McManaman released the ball right to Robbie Fowler, rather than left to Oyvind Leonhardsen, Liverpool might have gone ahead.

Within 60 seconds that error should have been punished by Batty, after the Liverpool defence had parted obligingly, but Batty's shot was straight at James, the keeper's only save of the first half.

> Newcastle's front line looked barren. There was a time when Ian Rush could have done it all on his own, but no more

While Batty had done well on his approach, his inability to find an attacking colleague spoke eloquently of Newcastle's barren front line. Often 10 and 20 passes would precede an aimless cross. There was a time when Ian Rush could do it all on his own but no more.

Liverpool, themselves much derided for over-passing, were content to break freely and quickly. From one such move around the half-hour Leonhardsen was presented with another inviting opportunity from Jason McAteer's inswinging centre but the Norwegian's glancing header flew inches wide.

Liverpool's greater threat was further emphasised before the interval when Owen burst through a series of unconvincing challenges only to blaze over from 12 yards; and then, after McManaman had briefly lost Hughes, Shaka Hislop had to be alert to stop Fowler.

Perhaps sensing there was a certain inevitability about Liverpool's progress, Dalglish brought on two forward movers at half-time, Temur Ketsbaia and Jon Dahl Tomasson, to try to renew Newcastle's momentum. In a noisy opening to the second half the switch-around proved effective in that it roused the crowd and brought Newcastle's best moment of the match so far.

Rush, with company at last, found Tomasson springing the Liverpool offside trap down the left; checking inside, the Dane looked up and spotted Ketsbaia unmarked at the far post. Tomasson picked out Ketsbaia with his cross but the Georgian made a hash of his volley, slicing it wide from inside James's six-yard box.

Though the chance had gone, at least Newcastle had interrupted Liverpool's flow, though Hislop was required to make a sharp block at the feet of Leonhardsen as the hour passed. As Newcastle settled, John Barnes's influence in midfield grew.



Dalglish . . . made changes

Yet, even with increasing possession, Newcastle found penetration a problem, defenders and midfielders frequently collecting the ball and then looking baffled at the lack of options.

Newcastle United (4-1-3-2): Hislop; Watson, Peacock, Albert (Tomasson, h-t), Beresford; Hughes, Lee, Batty, Gillespie (Ketsbaia, h-t); Barnes, Rush.

Liverpool (4-3-1-2): James; McAteer, Matteo, Babb, Harkness; Leonhardsen, Ince, Redknapp; McManaman; Fowler, Owen.

Referee D Gallagher (Banbury).

West Indies turn to Lara in hope and desperation



Paul Weaver

THE accession of Brian Lara is the most memorable example of sulk power since Violet Elizabeth Bott cowed the rascally William Brown into meek submission in the matchless tales of Just William by Richmal Crompton.

Lara has flounced into high office. For two years now, in which time his Test average has been 36, he has brooded in his tent while the fortunes of West Indies cricket have fallen into sharp decline.

He is the greatest batsman of his generation but it is sometimes forgotten how heavily his reputation depends on his outstanding deeds of 1994 when, in the space of six weeks, he made the highest scores in Test and first-class cricket, 375 against England and 501 for Warwickshire against Durham.

His motto then, with apologies to Captain Oates, might have been: "I'm going in. I may be some time." Of his 31 first-class centuries, 14 were scored in that calendar year. There have been only nine since.

In recent series Shivnarine Chanderpaul has been more dependable and Carl Hooper more brilliant. It is the desperate hope of regenerating Lara's batting, and through it the entire West Indies side, that lies behind his appointment. In the approaching series against England he is probably the one player on either side capable of winning it on his own.

England will need no reminding of the pivotal part he played in 1994, when his record-breaking innings in Antigua was probably less relevant than his resistance in the first Test and his 167 in the second, or of his magnificent hundreds at Old Trafford, Nottingham and The Oval in 1995.

Since then — including the recent 3–0 defeat in Pakistan in which he scored 126 runs in six innings — his batting has appeared impatient and unfocused. Making him captain in the hope it will revitalise his interest in playing is awful. But the West Indies Cricket Board deserves some sympathy. When the selectors chose Lara to lead in Pakistan, the board vetoed the move. They had serious misgivings, as they have now. But who else is there? Courtney Walsh is finished as a captain and Jimmy Adams is not in the side.

Lara, intelligent and a precociously thoughtful leader of Trinidad when only 20, may have it in him to become an outstanding Test captain. But first he has to win over his senior players, who respect his batting but little else. Even Viv Richards, not above a little arrogance himself, has doubts about him.

In Trinidad he has an opulent house and enjoys the status of a monarch. This is a country that, unlike Barbados and Jamaica, has produced few great cricketers. Sir Learie Constantine perhaps, Sonny Ramadhin possibly, but Lara is bigger and better than anything they have seen before. If he had grown up in Barbados, with the likes of Garry Sobers and Wes Hall to keep an eye on him, humility might have come to him more easily.

Even in Port of Spain there are those who have reservations. "Brian is a very talented, very charming big-headed boy," the former Glamorgan and West Indies opener Bryan Davis told me.

In Warwickshire, where they have also recently appointed him captain and given him a vast contract in the hope of concentrating his money-conscious attention, there are similar misgivings.

Publicly the players are backing Lara, but a number remain upset about the appointment and in particular the snubbing of the popular Tim Munton, who in their great year of 1994 led them more often than the official captain Dermot Reeve, winning eight games out of nine. Warwickshire, disgracefully, offered Lara the captaincy behind Munton's back. Privately, too, some Warwickshire players are disappointed that Neil Smith, who has shown greater captaincy potential than the England A skipper Nick Knight, was not given at least the vice-captaincy.

Bob Woolmer, the Warwickshire coach four years ago, said Lara was awkward to handle and clashed with Reeve. "He was inflexible and would often turn up at Edgbaston 10 minutes before a game," he said. Once he even took his mobile phone on to the outfield.

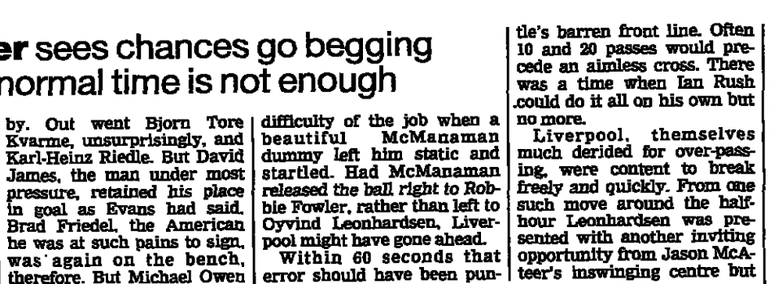
"This time," Lara told me in London three weeks ago, "I want to win more friends and make fewer enemies." He will be 29 in May, and there may be a new maturity, but we are still waiting to see it.

IF LARA bats as he did four years ago, England will probably lose the series. But England followers who wish him to fail as a captain are guilty of shallow hope, because the consequences for the game in the Caribbean could be dire.

The decline in West Indies cricket may be more than cyclical. Money is short and interest, in some islands, is on the wane. Internecine rivalries, kept in check over 20 years of outstanding success, are on the march again. The situation cries out for a Worrell, Sobers or Lloyd. Instead we have a spoiled man-child who was given the job to make him interested in playing.

Mike Selvey, page 15

Future is red for Williams



YES, that is Williams's world champion driver Jacques Villeneuve (right) and his team-mate Heinz-Harald Frentzen, and no, they are not attempting to break the suspension of a rival Ferrari sporting its trademark red livery.

Yes, money still talks and Frank Williams's F1 title-winning team showed yesterday how they have changed livery from Rothmans blue-and-white to Winfield red. And, oh yes, Winfield is a tobacco brand.

New Ferrari also red, page 13

When DeLillo writes about conspiracies, his language, usually exact, becomes a thick scrabble, sentimental and windy. There is a pompousness in this novel that suggests not epic ambition but epic confusion.

James Wood on Don DeLillo's Underworld

Books page 7, G2

Guardian Crossword No 21,166

Set by Araucaria

Across

8 Tell Joe after the attempt (2,6)

9 Sailor American? That's jumping to conclusions (6)

10 For such a man I must feel hostility (6)

11 Radioactive furniture for international negotiations? (8)

12 Excavation from 19 (4)

13 It's any girl you want, but not for a speakeasy (10)

15 Swell the general supplies (7)

16 The minx must take the pledge (7)

18 Expert, healthy, strong, and successful (10)

19 Bit a cat (4)

20 Dressed for football or not? (8)

22 5 or else her mate (6)

23 5's lighter opposite, with ancestress's acknowledgment (6)

24 Put out to grass, I find revellers (8)

Down

1 Decision time: why one isn't 18? (5,2,2,6)

2 The Dickens of a solecism, according to some (3,6,6)

3 Strike during journey requires battery (10)

4 Policy maker: he leaves Mantua in a fit of weeping (7)

5 River is accompanied by islands (4)

6 Convertible assets of city on the water 8-ing? (8,7)

7 2 (if it doesn't 8) producing Thatcher's nonentity? (8,7)

14 Waste an hour with Gene, more or less (4,6)

17 The devil's an evil fellow (7)

21 Ask quietly for illumination (4)

FORBIDDENFRUIT
UASROIMS
NEGLIGENTGUEST
DWNSIMRE
AMONGSHORTSTOP
MRLAEIS
ESTRANGEOCTAVO
NSKCE
THIRSTWAINSCOT
ASDSOLO
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